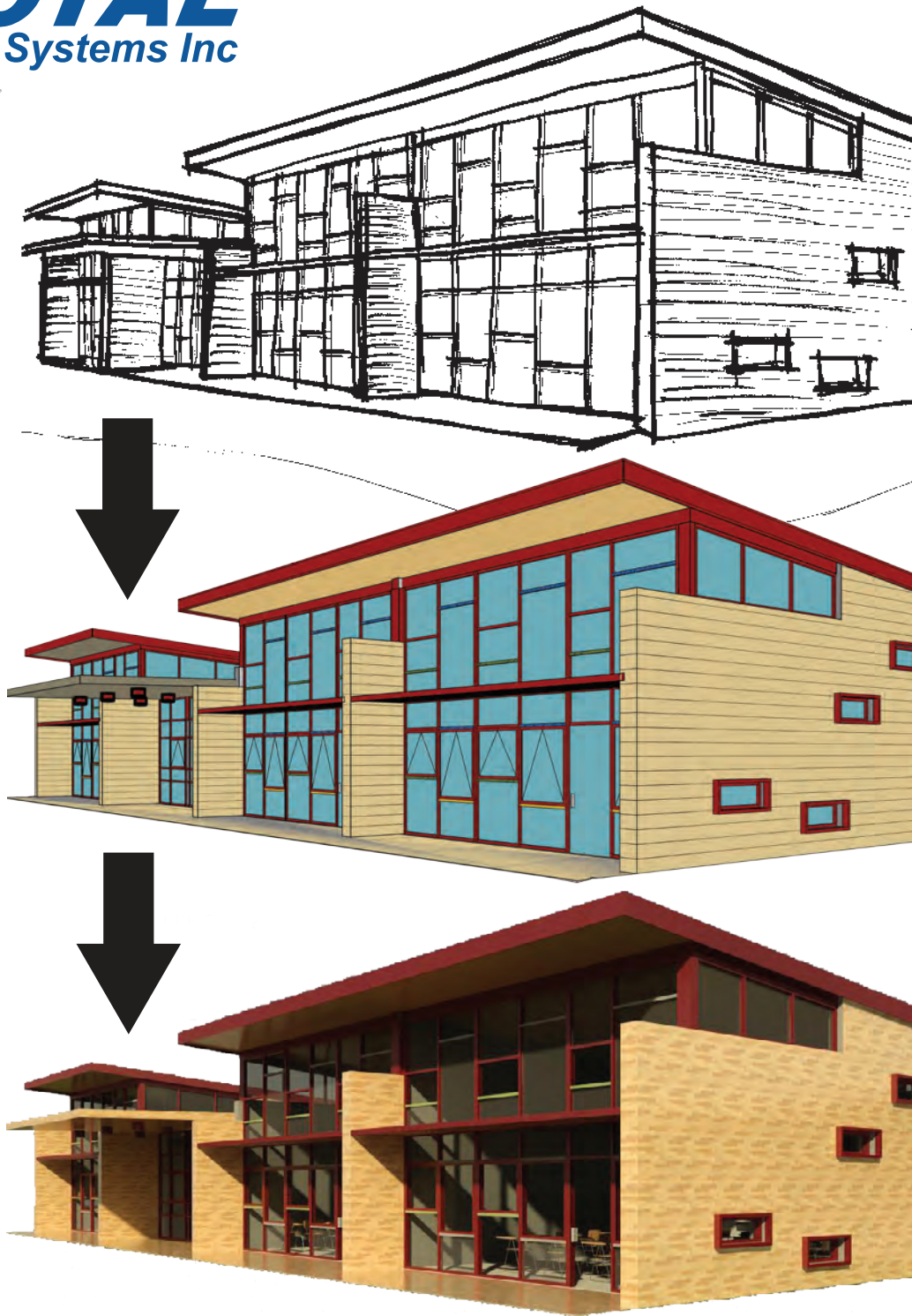


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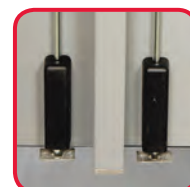
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Waller Wall was designed and built by UTSOA students Pearlene Chen, Raveena Bhlara, Claire Fontaine, Charlotte Friedley, Ben Goldberg, Kaitlyn Gruener, Arianna Hallenbeck, Phillip Hufschmid, Kätthe Meyers, Kara Turner, Ricardo Soto, Aubrey Werner, Cheryl Willett, Ricky Zenedejas, and Yingqian Zhuang.

Playing Up Waller Creek

by Catherine Gavin, Editor

Austin's Waller Creek Conservancy is staying on top of its mission to educate the public and create awareness about the value of Waller Creek, a derelict waterway that meanders through downtown. Its latest projects, Waller Wall and Pop-Up Adventure Picnic, were both hugely successful, attracting large crowds and creating visibility for local architects.

Waller Wall took its place on the outdoor terrace of Austin's SXSW Create — a three-day supplementary event to the larger South by Southwest festival in which hackers, makers, and DIY-ers consorted with robots and 3-D printers with drones zooming overhead. Brought about by a Design V studio at The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture (UTSOA) taught

The wall's layers were inspired by the subterranean limestone formations through which Waller Creek flows.

by Murray Legge, FAIA, and supported by the Conservancy, Waller Wall was the first in a series of installations planned to spotlight Waller Creek's forthcoming transformation into an urban park by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates and Thomas Phifer and Partners. As a sneak peek at the planned fall 2014 "Creek Show" installations, Waller Wall set a high bar, which the main event will have to meet.

The 18-foot undulating, plywood wall was filled with more than 1,300 blue "take-away" blocks, which festival-goers spent three days spray-painting. The wall's layers were inspired by the subterranean limestone formations through which Waller Creek flows. The interactive nature of the design speaks to the erosion of the creek banks: Visitors removed take-aways from one side of the wall, and the blocks accumulated unpredictably, as painted objects, on the other side — only to disappear as people took them home.

The Pop-Up Adventure Picnic took place in April and brought supporters of the creek together for an afternoon in Palm Park, a spot that is normally abandoned. These projects are bringing attention to the value of the long-neglected flood plain and the green spaces around it, emphasizing the hope that Waller Creek will become an invaluable asset of water and green space in the city.

This issue focuses on projects that are either inspired by water or built around interesting mechanical systems dealing with this resource. As droughts persist, thinking about appropriate water management will only become more and more relevant to daily life and to how people inhabit their homes and cities.

Catherine Gavin

Contributors



Jen Wong is a recent addition to the regular contributors to *TA*. She is director of the University Co-op Materials lab at UT Austin, a job that she says, “Is too much fun.” Jen encourages all design enthusiasts to check out the lab’s 27,000+ samples, which make up the largest academic collection of its kind. Read her article about Baldrige Architects’ downtown spa on page 40.



Heather McKinney, FAIA founded her Austin-based firm McKinney York Architects more than 30 years ago. She is an advocate of good design and of the important role architecture plays in building community. Heather is also a former president of the Texas Society of Architects. Last fall, during the Past Presidents Retreat, she visited the Torcasso residence in Santa Fe. Read her article about the house on page 60.



Ingrid Spencer wears many hats. She is co-director of Austin’s Creek Show, a regular contributor to *TA*, and a contributing editor for *Architectural Record*. Creek Show is a series of proposed installations designed to bring attention to the rehabilitation of Waller Creek into a 1.5-mile-long urban park. To kick-start the event, Ingrid’s hand-made “creek monsters” were on sale at SXSW. She also took a moment to write about Shipley Architects’ new project. Read her article on page 46.



Candid Rogers, AIA is an architect based in San Antonio, where he teaches architectural design and leads the Barcelona Study Abroad program at the University of Texas at San Antonio. He enjoys sketching with coffee and spoon. Read his article about Rockridge Gardens on page 76.



Frederick R. Steiner is the dean of the School of Architecture and Henry M. Rockwell Chair in Architecture, The University of Texas at Austin. As a Fulbright-Hays scholar in 1980, he conducted research on ecological planning at the Wageningen University, The Netherlands. He was a 1998 Rome Prize Fellow and 2013–14 Resident at the American Academy in Rome. He is a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Dean Steiner was a visiting professor at Tsinghua University in Beijing, China (2005–2007). His most recent books include “Urban Ecological Design” (with Danilo Palazzo, 2011) and “Design for a Vulnerable Planet” (2011). Read his thoughts on alternative grasses on page 27.



Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA is currently a designer with Baldrige Architects in Austin and a contributing editor to BI (*bipublications.com*). He received his Bachelor of Science in Architectural Design from MIT, where he completed a semester on exchange at TU Delft. Read his review of Austin's Cascading Creek House on page 52.



Michael E. Allex, AIA is a third-generation Valley Rat — Rio Grande Valley Rat, that is. After graduating from Texas Tech University and working in Dallas for three years, Mike returned to his native Harlingen. He has practiced architecture there for nearly 25 years. Mike enjoys the best of the Valley: fishing the flats and hunting the ranch country. Read his article about bcWORKSHOP's new housing project on page 32.



Nonya Grenader, FAIA is principal of her own small firm in Houston. At Rice University School of Architecture, she is professor in practice and associate director of the Rice Building Workshop. Grenader wrote an excellent article about Raymond D. Brochstein, FAIA, for the March/April issue of *TA*. The article is now posted on the Texas Architects website.



Rita Catinella Orrell is our new products editor. She has been writing about design for over 18 years, covering architecture, interior design, home furnishings, kitchen and bath design, and building products. She was the products editor for *Architectural Record* for 14 years and was the founding editor of *SNAP*, a quarterly building products magazine. She currently writes about product design at www.designythings.com and www.architects-toybox.com. Check out her selection of kitchen and bath products on page 22. ■

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July/August 2014

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STG Design (Architect of Record)

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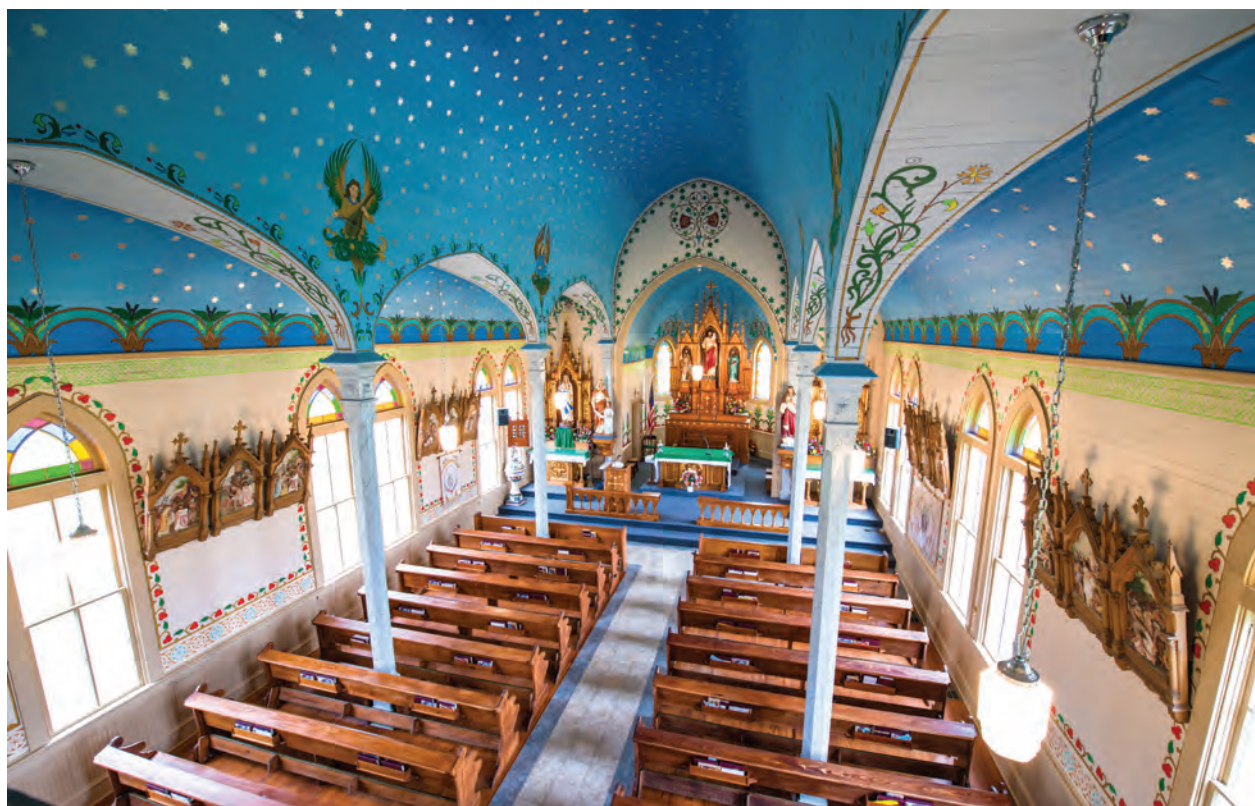
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Three views of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church, Dubina.

Painted Churches

by Gerald Moorhead, FAIA

Texas has many spectacular architectural ensembles: dozens of historic county courthouses set in period squares; the commercial and residential districts in places like Galveston and Jefferson, frozen in time; the plaza and Border Brick-style buildings of Roma; the five missions of San Antonio; and so many more.

Among these special groups are the so-called “Painted Churches” scattered around the countryside of Central Texas. Interior decorative schemes defined by marbling, stencil, graining, and other *trompe l’oeil* techniques transform plain wooden structures into baroque wonders of gold-starred heavens, hovering angels, birds, abstract foliage, and geometric patterns.

There are about two dozen churches in Texas with significant interior decorative painting. Fifteen of them are listed together on the National Register of Historic Places. Perhaps the best known are four churches built in Fayette County between La Grange and Schulenburg, and one located further north in Lee County near Giddings: St. John the Baptist Catholic Church; Nativity of Mary, Blessed Virgin Catholic Church; St. Mary’s Church of the Assumption; Sts. Cyril



and Methodius Catholic Church; and St. Paul’s Lutheran Church.

A brief history of Sts. Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church in Dubina is representative of this group and many other rural churches of the period.

The Central Texas Blackland Prairie Anglo plantation economy, which had been established in the 1820s, gradually changed in the 1840s and ’50s, as German and then Czech immigrants arrived, creating small family-operated farms. Dubina, Czech for “oak grove,” was the first solely Czech-Moravian town in Texas. By the end of the 19th century, it was an important regional center for Czech commerce, education, and religion.

From 1909 to 1911, San Antonio-based architect Leo M.J. Dielmann designed and built Sts.



Cyril and Methodius Catholic Church. Characterized by the Carpenter Gothic style with tall, narrow, four-over-four, pointed-arch windows, the church is a basilican three-aisle plan. A steep gabled roof covers the rectangular volume

The interior transforms the basic tectonic armature of columns and vaults with painted ornament of a decidedly Central European peasant character.

with bracketed overhangs. The west facade is punctuated by a two-stage tower with a square, two-story base section and an octagonal upper



section that is topped by a metal-clad spire. Four small turrets at the inset corners of the octagon aid the visual transition of the tower's forms. Wooden buttresses at the corners and along the

Interior decorative schemes transform plain wooden structures into baroque wonders.

side walls stabilize the structure and hint at the use of vaults within. A polygonal apse projects from the east end. Tom Lee's iron cross from an 1877 church tops the spire.

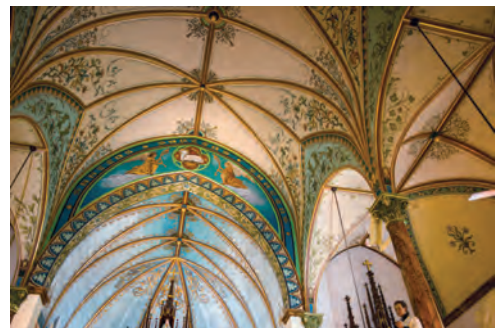
While the exterior is elegant and architecturally resolved, reflecting the talent of the architect, the interior transforms the basic tectonic armature of columns and vaults with painted ornament of a decidedly Central European peasant character. The vaulting boards are pale blue, and the walls are a light cream. Along the edges of the nave arcade and around the window frames are floral patterns painted using stencils. The reredos, side aisle altars, and Stations of the Cross are dark wood with gilded accents.

Upon completion of the church, change was already decimating the community. The railroad had bypassed Dubina and established Schulenburg to the south, drawing away business and citizens. In 1912, a devastating fire destroyed most of Dubina's commercial enterprises. The economic turmoil of World War

I and the Great Depression further destabilized the agricultural scene.

Only a few derelict buildings in this once-thriving community survive. The church remains today, and the KJZT Hall, a community center constructed in 1936, still hosts events, barbecues, and polka bands. The church is well maintained and is open to visitors every day of the week, as are most of the other painted churches in the region.

Gerald Moorhead, FAIA, is the author and photographer of "Buildings of Texas" and has been a contributor to *TA* since 1983.



Images are arranged in stacked pairs clockwise from left showing a wide and detail shot of each church *St. Paul's Lutheran Church, Serbin; St. John the Baptist Catholic Church, Ammannsville; St. Mary's Church of the Assumption, Praha; Nativity of Mary, Blessed Virgin Catholic Church, High Hill*

PHOTOS BY ALAN GRAHAM ROBERTS, AIA

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Caret 6

by Catherine Gavin

Caret 6, a dramatic installation by architect Kory Bieg of OTA+ and his Design V Studio at The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture, is making its way around the state. The project jumped from the TEX-FAB conference earlier this year to Austin's ever-expanding South by Southwest (SXSW) festival — a week or so of music, film, and interactive events. The installation provided the backdrop for Next Stage, the setup for various panels during SXSW Interactive, and for the Renegade Craft Fair, a supplemental event for the music portion of SXSW. The project's next stop is the University of Houston.

Motivated by the example of cavernous ribbed Gothic ceilings, the student designers built the structure out of many, many diamond-shaped, CNC-manufactured pieces of sheet steel. Using parametric modeling tools, they created three layers of overlapping ribs. Continuous primary ribs create vaults that are reinforced by secondary ribs that span the distance between them. A third layer — tertiary ribs — weaves the entire design together, enclosing the individual cells and providing tensile rigidity for the vaults. The cluster of arches rises 11 ft, and the

cantilevered offshoots project outward before tumbling down to spill across the floor. The original 60-ft-long installation was cut into 40-ft and 20-ft sections for the two noncontiguous installations at SXSW, but the impressive piece will be returned to its original size for the UH installation.

Student designers included Aarti Khatter, Alline Kane, Claire Miller, Gabriel Tagliante, Layla Salameh, Stancey Moore, Alexander Dallas, Bernardo Jiménez, Elizabeth Fuchs, Kelsey McCarter, Michael Rahmatoulin, Zachery Walters, Alexis Meur, Brenda Morlan

Continuous primary ribs create vaults that are reinforced by secondary ribs that span the distance between them.

Villafuerte, Estrella Juárez, Kevin Keating, and Nadejda Aseeva. “The project explored overall symmetry defined by localized asymmetries,” said Bieg. “We focused on abrupt changes in the geometries.” The result is an undulating marvel whose larger modules integrate seamlessly with its smaller ones. A fairy tale of translucent feathers, Caret 6 springs from and then cascades back down onto the floor. ■

Calendar



Birdhouses in the Garden

March 29–June 29

www.sabot.org

The San Antonio Botanical Garden is featuring six one-of-a-kind giant birdhouses. The exhibit is part of an ongoing, partnership between the gardens and AIA San Antonio, aimed at showcasing both organizations' commitment to the environment, recycling, education, and sustainability.

Gulf Coast Green

June 19–20

www.aiahouston.org

Gulf Coast Green Symposium and Expo, a leading green building conference in the Gulf Coast region, will include activities over two days. A Green Product Showcase featuring hand-selected green building products will be open to all attendees concurrently with the symposium. Registration for the event is open.

2014 National AIA Convention

June 26–28

convention.aia.org

MacArthur “genius grant” winner Jeanne Gang, FAIA, founder of Chicago-based collective Studio Gang Architects, kicks off Day One of the 2014 National AIA Convention in Chicago. Gang will discuss the radical creativity and cross-disciplinary collaboration that have made her work, such as the Aqua Tower, so compelling.

2014 Student Biennial

July 31

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Architecture Center Houston will feature the best and brightest student work from all eight accredited architecture programs in the state: the University of Houston, Rice University, Prairie View A&M University, Texas A&M University, Texas Tech, The University of Texas at Austin, the University of Texas at San Antonio, and the University of Texas at Arlington. ■



McKinney York Architects the recipient of
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Submittal Deadline

13 June 2014



Preservation Texas Honor Awards

Last November, Preservation Texas announced the winners of its 2013 Honor Awards. The annual competition recognizes outstanding and inspiring accomplishments in historic preservation throughout Texas. Recipients were honored at an award ceremony held on December 5 at Mission San Jose in San Antonio.

Historic Rehabilitation Award

1 Dedrick-Hamilton House, Austin

McKinney York Architects

The 1892 Dedrick-Hamilton House was the home of early African-American community leaders William and Sarah Dedrick. William's father, Thomas, was a freed slave and an early property owner in East Austin's Robertson Hill neighborhood. The home has been restored to prominence and has been repurposed as the visitors' center for the city's African-American Cultural and Heritage District.

2 Luby/Shaffer House, San Antonio

Mainstreet Architects

The Luby/Shaffer House was built in 1907, but some time after 1968 it was converted into a multi-family residence and then fell into disrepair. After a careful restoration and modernization emphasizing sustainability — at the request of the owner, every piece of wood was saved and reused — the Neoclassical home is now one of the finest examples of its style in the city; its restoration has dramatically changed the end of the King William Historic District.

3 Ted Lokey Oil Company, Amarillo

Charles R. Lynch, Architect

The Ted Lokey Oil Company building has a new life as the offices of Charles R. Lynch, Architect, and Jerry Haning Construction. The project exemplifies creative and adaptive reuse of an abandoned structure in a decaying neighborhood to provide a modern office space along one of the city's most-trafficked corridors. Developers saved the building from demolition and set an example for revitalizing the neighborhood that others are already following.

4 Our Lady of the Lake University Main Building, San Antonio

Muñoz & Company (formerly Kell Muñoz Architects)

Our Lady of the Lake's Main Building was constructed in 1897 and is an example of Chateausque Revival architecture. In 2008, a fire destroyed its roof and fourth floor and heavily damaged the lower levels. The university restored the landmark, bringing it up to 21st-century academic facility standards while maintaining its historic integrity. Its completion has sparked other plans for neighborhood revitalization.



Preservation Texas Honor Awards

Historic Restoration Award

5 Comal County Courthouse, New Braunfels

Volz & Associates

Designed in the Romanesque Revival style, this building is one of James Riely Gordon's 12 remaining Texas courthouses. In restoring this 1898 structure to its original configuration, Comal County officials repeatedly opted for accurate restoration over less developed, inexpensive solutions. The County's good stewardship was reflected in the community's support and involvement over the course of the project.

6 Stevens Park Pavilion, Dallas

ARCHITEXAS

This 1934 park pavilion, of stone and mortar construction, had fallen into disrepair largely due to subsidence and erosion of soils along the city's Coombs Creek. As part of the meticulous restoration project, the pavilion was methodically deconstructed, with its 4,867 native stones stored in a carefully catalogued inventory. It was reassembled on a new, drilled-pier foundation further from the edge of the creek.

7 Mission San Juan de Capistrano, San Antonio

Ford, Powell & Carson Architects

Mission San Juan is a State Antiquities Landmark, a National Register of Historic Places property, and part of the upcoming San Antonio Missions World Heritage nomination. It also has an active congregation, with many of its parishioners able to trace their lineage back to original mission inhabitants. The recent careful restoration project renewed and transformed the landmark, which once suffered from structural movement and damaged plaster.

Clara Driscoll Award

8 Cleo Lemonte "Montie" Goodin

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Products

by Rita Catinella Orrell

The International Builders' Show (IBS) and the Kitchen & Bath Industry Show (KBIS) co-located for the first time in February during the inaugural Design & Construction Week in Las Vegas. Here, we present some of the latest innovations for residential kitchen and bath spaces on display at the show, including a direct vent gas fireplace that can be hung just about anywhere.



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TOTO claims that its NEOREST 750H toilet offers the most complete bowl-cleansing system on the market. First, as the lid opens, a “pre-mist” wets the bowl surface, creating a process that is 80 percent more effective than a dry bowl at preventing waste from sticking to the surface. The hydrotect titanium dioxide coating creates a hydrophilic surface that allows waste, lime scale, and mold to wash away easily. After each flush, the bowl is misted with electrolyzed water to keep it clean longer, and a UV light integrated into the seat lid (and activated when closed) triggers a photocatalytic process on the bowl to further break down organic substances.



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Intended to aid caregivers, parents, or anyone trying to avoid temperature surprises, Delta's Temp20 Technology is a digital temperature display featuring LED color indicators to signal different water temperatures. Blue indicates temperatures below 80 degrees Fahrenheit; magenta denotes 80 to approximately 110 degrees; and red signals any temperature greater than 110 degrees. This new offering will be available on a variety of hand showers, showerheads, and tub showers starting this spring. While Temp20 hand showers and showerheads are hydro-powered, the built-in tub showers will be battery-operated.



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With 7"-deep profiles, the REVO Series of direct vent gas fireplaces can be hung just about anywhere, including bathrooms. The new contemporary series comes in square, linear, and vertical models, and features shiny black interiors that add depth and reflect flames. An invisible, patented burner produces up to 24,000 BTU output, while expelling 100 percent of exhaust gases outside of the home to protect indoor air quality. The space-saving fireplace can be recessed into a wall, or installed flush on a wall on mounting brackets — no additional framing is required. The suggested retail price for REVO Series fireplaces starts at \$2,598.



Electrolux Dishwasher with IQ-Touch Controls

Electrolux

www.electroluxappliances.com

Returning to KBIS for the first time since 2008, Electrolux introduced a new lineup of dishwashers and induction cooking solutions in a booth it shared with Frigidaire. Its new 24" stainless steel dishwasher with IQ-Touch controls offers a Fast Wash cycle that thoroughly cleans and dries dishes in just 30 minutes. The dishwasher's ProClean and SatelliteSpray Arm technology provides 400 percent more water coverage than a traditional dishwasher, while an adjustable Third Level Rack offers space for spatulas and unique kitchen tools, or extra room for everyday utensils.



Sip Beverage Faucets

Moen

www.moen.com

In response to consumer research that shows that 38 percent of individuals looking to remodel their kitchens in the next 12 months have an interest in purchasing a filtered water dispenser, Moen has introduced the new Sip line of beverage faucets. Intended for drinking water or cooking water, Sip beverage faucets come in traditional, transitional, or modern styles in a range of finishes. Each features a high-arc, rotating spout to make filling tall glasses, pots, or large containers easier. The single-hole installation fits cleanly against popular solid-surface and natural material countertops.



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Boat Dock

Alterstudio Architecture

The views up and down Lake Austin are impressive: Rolling hills covered in trees frame a slightly narrow strip of green-blue water with an enormous sky above. “It’s great,” says Ernesto Cragolino, AIA, of Alterstudio Architecture. “But if you look across the lake, you are essentially looking into someone’s not-so-far-away backyard.” The privacy issue increases when you consider the fact that the lake was designed for recreational use and receives heavy water traffic on warm days.

Alterstudio’s boat dock for a new residential project embraces the long views of the water and landscape, but screens the immediacy of the speedboats from backyard barbecuers. The timber slats hide the slip and extend up, providing a guardrail for the 500-sf deck. The house has substantial lake frontage, allowing for a fairly wide dock within the rule allowance. The deck is programmed with a small kitchenette and area for relaxing. Below, the slip, which accommodates one boat and two jet skis,

is positioned parallel to the yard. The small dock provides easy access to a storage area and changing room.

“It is a beautiful setup,” says Cragolino. “It is the last property on the road, and we are integrating water features into the entry sequence of the house. The boat dock along the edge of the sloped backyard helps introduce the water again.” ■

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The South Lawn at The University of Texas at Austin is the campus' most symbolically important landscape and one of its most heavily used. This state of affairs requires exceptional commitment of resources not supportable in most other areas of the campus.

Shifting Leaves of Grass

by Frederick R. Steiner

We Americans love our grassy expanses. They dominate many of our nation's most cherished places, as well as our homes, parks, and golf courses. Lawn maintenance presents significant economic and environmental costs. Much of an institution's budget or a family's weekend can be consumed attending to a yard mowing, trimming, fertilizing, weeding, watering, planting, and hauling away trimmings.

Most American university campuses possess significant symbolic open spaces that come in many shapes and sizes. The South Mall is The University of Texas at Austin's most iconic open space. Paul Cret designed the mall to visually connect the university's tower with the dome of the State Capitol, down the hill to the south.

To make the South Mall presentable for significant events, like the spring graduation ceremony, considerable effort and expenditures are necessary. Traditionally, the Celebration Bermuda grass lawn has been completely replaced annually at a cost of \$13,000 to \$14,000. The year-round popularity of the South Mall and its intensive use have ecological consequences; soil compaction, for example, stresses the live oaks that frame the lawn. Many of these trees were planted around the same time and will likely die together.

In planning for the future of the UT Austin campus landscape, there are at least four options for the South Mall (if we rule out AstroTurf).

First, we can accept the status quo. This option would justify the maintenance costs by focusing on the value of the mall for graduation and other large-scale events, and on its role as a backdrop for the Longhorn Network and other broadcasts. In addition, the mall possesses historical values that merit preservation, and in the case of its Confederate statues, incite debate.

A second option (and the one currently being pursued by UT Austin) is to adjust its management practices. The university has changed the ground cover below the live oaks, replacing the grass with hardwood mulch. The grounds maintenance team has employed a

The South Mall should be viewed as a living landscape.

less aggressive lawn restoration procedure that causes minimal harm to the tree roots and may eliminate the need for annual turf replacement. They no longer apply any synthetic fertilizers on the South Mall (or anywhere else on campus). The use of organic fertilizers and soil additives, such as compost and humates, also improves appearance and drought tolerance. UT Austin has also moved some large events away from the South Mall but maintained its use as a pleasant place for students to mingle and as a spot for informal university gatherings. This management approach should be expanded to include a



Happy Turf

Greenway Parks in Dallas is touted as a sedate, tree-lined, pastoral collection of well-kept lawns. When John Mullen, FAIA, decided that he no longer wanted to toe the line, spending time and resources mowing and watering his yard, he turned to landscape architect Kevin Sloan. They agreed that a desertlike succulent-and-gravel-filled planting plan would not be appropriate. Furthermore, native grass alternatives and sun-loving blends such as Habiturf would be less effective than usual, due to the predominance of shade on the ground.

Instead, Sloan developed "Happy Turf," a prototype for a sustainable yard, whose installation costs are offset by minimal maintenance time and cost. The design is an idiosyncratic mix of grasses, forbs, and perennials. Unlike conventional native grasses, Happy Turf will never grow above six or eight inches high. Sloan's pointillist grid respects the tabletop smoothness of neighbors' lawns, allowing a somewhat seamless transition from yard to yard.

A year into enjoying and caring for the lawn, Mullen notes that neighbors are expressing interest in replicating his yard. "In Dallas, 80 percent of water consumption goes to irrigation," he said. "We mowed once last spring, and we lightly watered two or three times over the summer." Happy Turf is proving a viable alternative, though Sloan notes that it is still a work in progress. "We are considering augmenting the base grass mix to include some other species in hopes of increasing the density," he said. ■



GEORGE W. BUSH PRESIDENTIAL CENTER LANDSCAPE
 1 STONE SEEP
 2 BIOSWALE
 3 NATIVE TURF GRASS
 4 WILDFLOWER MEADOW
 5 PRAIRIE
 6 STONE CHECK DAMS
 7 IRRIGATION CISTERN
 8 WET PRAIRIE

replacement strategy for the trees, recognizing that soil compaction will hasten their demise. The South Mall should be viewed as a living landscape, not a tree museum — a landscape in which tree replacement is an expected and planned activity.

A third option would be to keep the historical spatial structure but replace the Celebration Bermuda grass with a native species while also

All good design needs to balance several factors, including use, cost, aesthetics, ecology, and maintenance. The drought has illustrated the need for a new ecologically based aesthetic.

adopting a tree replacement strategy for the live oaks, which might include adding other tree species to enhance diversity. For example, scientists at the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center have developed a native grass mix called Habiturf. The blend includes three to four native species: buffalo grass, blue grama, curly mesquite, and sometimes Texas grama. The

advantage is that Habiturf requires far less water, fertilizer, and mowing, and attracts fewer weeds than does Bermuda grass.

Although Habiturf needs less water and fertilizer, it certainly does need some. Maintenance would require a different approach, but one that would have some similarities to the steps UT Austin has already taken, such as the use of organic fertilizers. The Habiturf option would definitely conserve water. Tests done by the Wildflower Center show that Habiturf can stay green in the summer with only ½" of water twice a month. By comparison, according to the university's South Mall Irrigation Report, the Bermuda grass there received an estimated 6.5" in August 2013. Also, if watering is stopped entirely, the grass will go dormant (but not die). The Habiturf will then green up again once water restrictions are lifted or rain arrives. However, the biggest drawback to Habiturf is its lack of tolerance of heavy foot traffic.

Fourth, a radical departure from the current industrial lawn could be pursued. This approach could involve Habiturf but also mix in wildflowers. The rows of live oaks could be replaced by groups of oak motts like those that occur



Opposite page *Alternative grass landscapes at the George W. Bush Presidential Center offer economical solutions for low- and medium-use areas and support best-practice storm water strategies.*

Left and bottom *UT Austin and other universities could follow the lead established by the Bush Presidential Center landscape. The 15-acre park employs a blend of native plant species and a storm water management system that emphasizes conservation while creating pleasant places for people to gather.*

naturally. An understory of plants could be introduced between the grass and the giant live oaks. Such a mix would result in even lower water and fertilizer use and would attract birds, butterflies, and other species. This approach requires a new, ecological aesthetic. A precedent is provided by the park of the George W. Bush Presidential Center on the Southern Methodist University (SMU) campus in Dallas. Designed by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates' Boston office with help from the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center, the park employs Habiturf and other native species. The Bush Center's park provides a dramatic contrast to the manicured lawns of the rest of the SMU campus.

For the South Mall and for other historic, iconic open spaces at UT Austin and elsewhere, probably one of the first three approaches will be preferred. With increased concern about water, however, consideration of native grasses like Habiturf will likely grow. For new open spaces, the third and fourth approaches demand more attention. Beyond design, UT Austin's management of the South Mall illustrates how shifting maintenance can improve the environmental health of a place. Successful landscape design



considers factors like turf maintenance. All good design needs to balance several factors, including use, cost, aesthetics, ecology, and maintenance. The drought has illustrated the need for a new ecologically based aesthetic, and native grasses, including Habiturf, have much to contribute to this approach. The creation of a new ecological aesthetic for Texas landscapes presents a challenging and stimulating opportunity for architects and planners.

Frederick R. Steiner is dean of The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture.

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After the Rain

by Michael E. Alex, AIA

Project La Hacienda Casitas, Harlingen

Client Community Development Corporation of Brownsville

Architect buildingcommunityWORKSHOP (bcWORKSHOP)

Design Team Brent A. Brown, AIA; Benje Feehan, Assoc. AIA; Omar Hakeem, Assoc. AIA; Andrew Sturm, AIA; James Oppelt, Assoc. AIA

Photographer Skyler J. Fike

As one travels south on Business 83, the old Texas highway bends toward the east and parallels the Rio Grande River. In the 1930s, this section of 83 ran through the downtown areas of the major cities from Laredo to Brownsville and was known as “America’s longest Main Street.” During the postwar period, however, commerce in the Lower Rio Grande Valley shifted away from its agrarian roots, and Expressway 83 was built to the north, circumventing the towns. Highway 83 became Business 83, leaving the downtowns and their connecting corridor to fend for themselves as economic activity slowed, with traffic steadily migrating toward the new expressway.

Much of what is left along Business 83 is now abandoned and derelict. But a vibrant, low-income housing project located just west of Harlingen is demonstrating the value of smart architecture and community revitalization. La Hacienda Casitas is a 56-unit complex that was developed on the former site of a mid-20th-century motor court. The \$6 million project was

designed by buildingcommunityWORKSHOP (bcWORKSHOP) under the direction of a public-private partnership between the Cameron County Housing Authority (CCHA) and the Community Development Corporation of Brownsville (CDCB).

The CCHA acquired the 5.9-acre complex just after the property was dealt a deathblow by Hurricane Dolly, which ravaged the South Texas coast in 2008. Salvaging the asbestos-filled buildings was impractical, and the CCHA shuttered the complex with the intent to rebuild in the future with a multi-agency coalition.

In 2011, the CDCB stepped in, assuming ownership of the neglected property under a 75-year land lease from CCHA. CDCB has been working in the Valley since 1974 and values efficient, sustainable design, and quality construction. As the largest nonprofit single-family housing developer in the state, the organization knows what it is doing and appreciates pushing the envelope when the opportunity arises. Nick Mitchell-Bennett, CDCB’s executive director, notes that bcWORKSHOP won

the commission by keying in on their hope for a cottage community — a smaller, denser single-family rental community.

Brent A. Brown, AIA, founding director of bcWORKSHOP, expanded his Dallas-based studio to the Valley in the fall of 2011. His team set up shop in Brownsville and recognized what we locals all know to be true: There is a dire need for more housing options to help immigrants in poverty live with respect and dignity. Perhaps nowhere in this country is public housing more needed than in the Valley.

The project represented considerable challenges. In order for it to qualify as a reconstruction project under the Texas Department of Housing & Community Affairs low-income housing tax credit program, the architects had to replicate the number of units that were on the property prior to the rehabilitation. They also had to take into consideration the site grade and the most valuable element of the land: a cluster of old-growth Texas ebonies.

The motor court had been converted into a housing complex, which consisted of 56 studio and one-bedroom, single-story units on a nicely wooded — but very, very flat — site. In order to maximize density, 56 new one- to three-bedroom units were arranged on the site so that all of the trees could be maintained and water could be efficiently directed into the municipal drainage system. The La Hacienda Casitas homes are 800- to 1,100-sf, one- and two-story buildings arranged around green spaces. A community center, barbeque area, park, and playground are all linked by paths crisscrossing the site.

Achieving the density needed to meet state requirements was a challenge for the design team, but the group achieved a one-inch tolerance for all of the buildings. “The only way to add more density would have been to remove the trees, and that wasn’t an option for us,” commented Omar Hakeem, Assoc. AIA, bcWORKSHOP’s lead designer on the project. Getting to the most effective solution for maximizing the density was tough. But Hakeem noted that drainage was arguably the most significant trial — everything about the project addresses how to move water.

“Engineers and planners have a tendency to get storm water off a site as quickly as possible, without thinking about the guy next door,” said Mitchell-Bennett. “We cannot sustain the way that we are designing these water systems. In the Valley, current systems are absolutely archaic. We don’t get a lot of water, but when we do, it comes all at once.”

At the La Hacienda Casitas site, the team was challenged with keeping upwards of 96,000 gallons of storm water on the property for as long as possible, in order to avoid inundating Harlingen’s storm system. The green spaces had to be layered and stitched together. “It ended up being a huge asset to the project,” said Hakeem.

Special care had to be given to saving the trees, and fully re-grading the interminably flat site was not an option. bcWORKSHOP responded to the problem by directing and filtering the water through bioswales that make up all of the property’s green spaces. Water runs from the pitched roofs into depressed planted beds

bcWORKSHOP won the commission by keying in on CDCB’s hope for a cottage community — a smaller, denser single-family rental community.

around each building; it eventually makes its way to the roads, where the water is directed into the system of bioswales, moving down the length of the site. Water then collects in another series of retention areas, where it is pumped to another bioswale before it is discharged.

“The idea is to create a variety of moments where the water slows down, allowing the vegetation to absorb as much of it as possible,” said Hakeem. The water is circulated around the property twice before it then moves into the municipal system.

The landscape also informed the building materials and finishes. The strategy was to keep the building forms simple, using prismatic cubes and breaking the massing down further with the colors of gray, yellow-gold, and green. Applied in an eyedropper fashion, the colors are inspired by the tones of the ebony trees,



Opposite Page *La Hacienda Casitas maximizes density on the site while providing ample green space for the community. Saving the Texas ebony trees was extremely important, both to the client and to the architects.*

Left *The units range from 800 to 1,100 sf and are finished with a contemporary look.*



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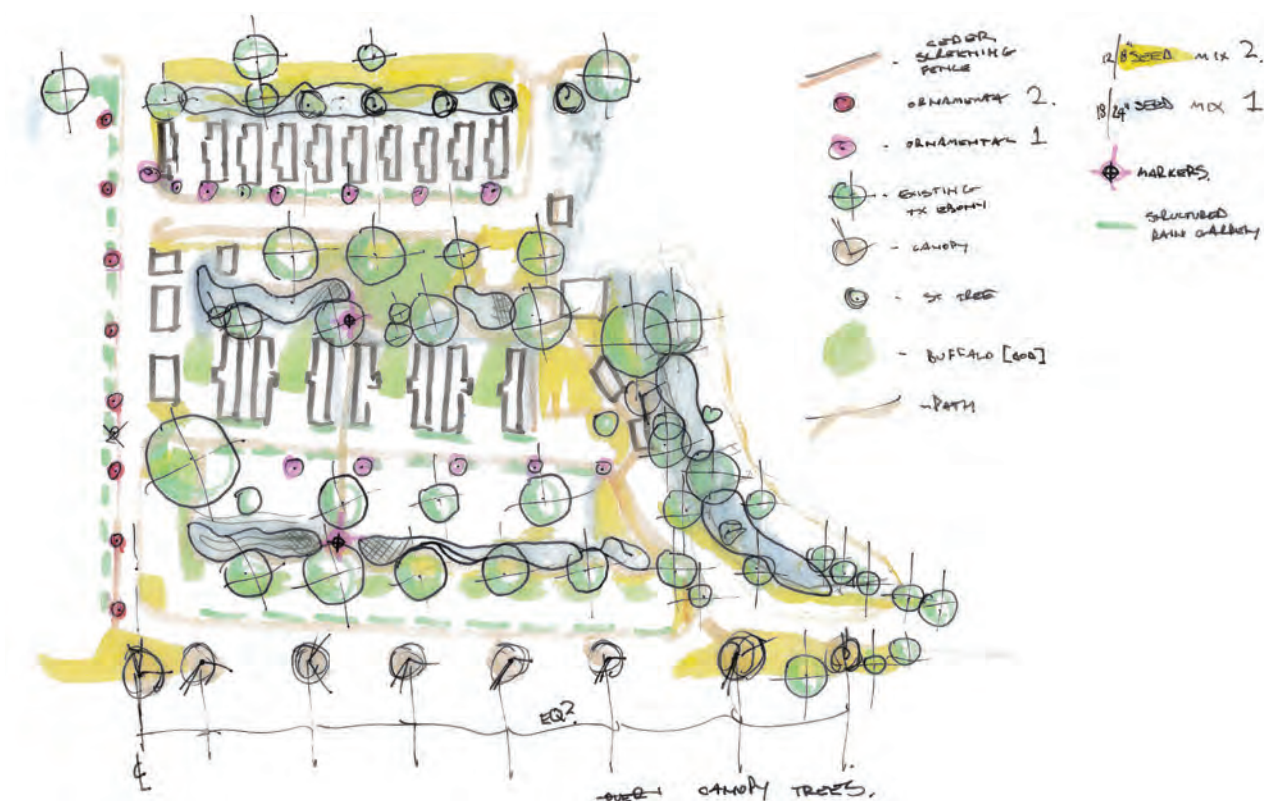
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and weave the buildings beautifully into the indigenous landscape. Pushing the two-story buildings together changed the scale of the amalgam. Situating them along the perimeter of the site created a more inward-looking layout and allowed for an efficient system of bioswales in the center of the property and in between the units.

It also provided a sense of protection and community, which was further enhanced by placing front doors on the park side to create an “eyes on the street” security. The roads are narrow and curbsless, making them very pedestrian-friendly and giving them a rural

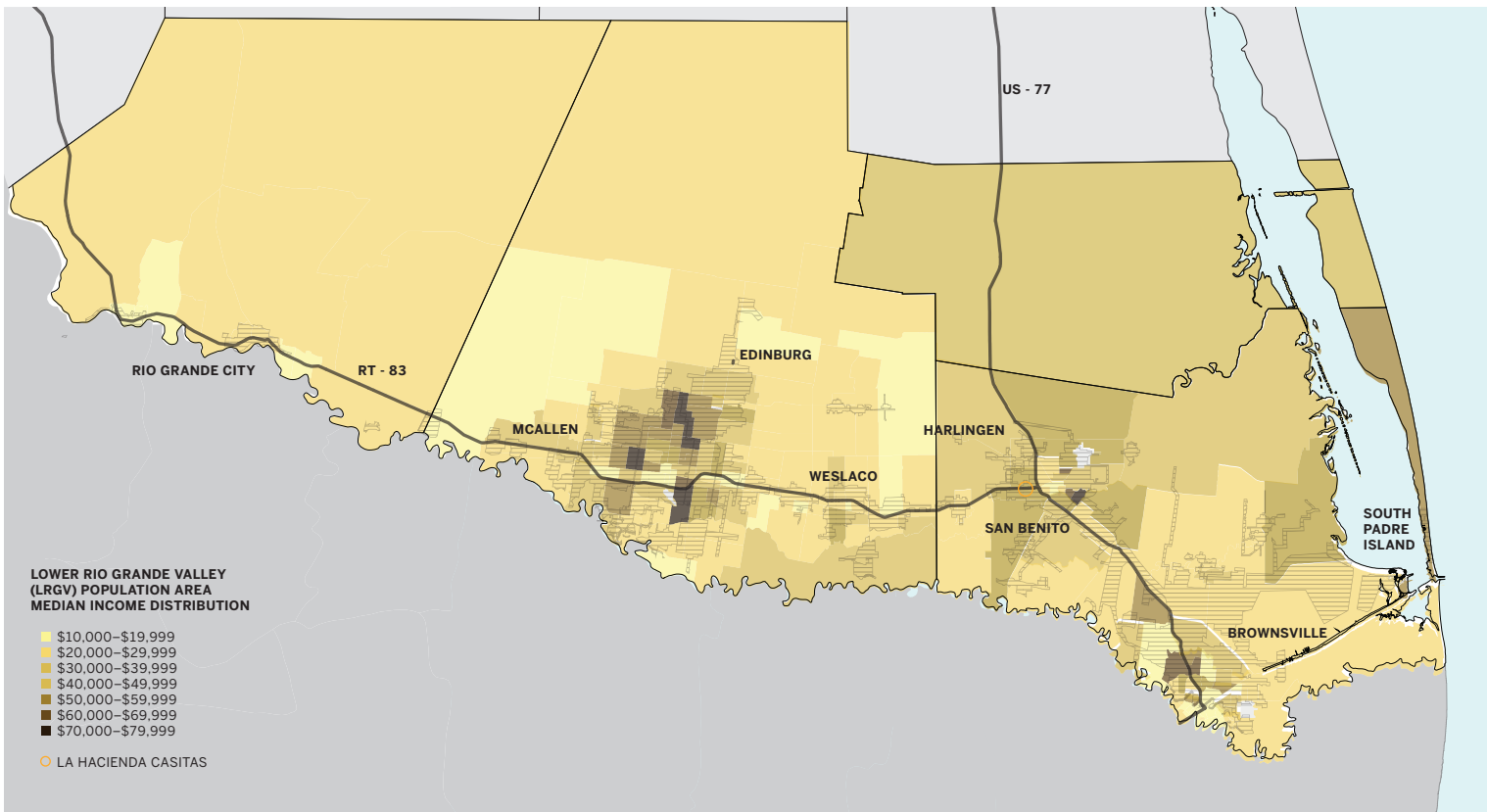
Everything about the project addresses how to move water. Engineers and planners have a tendency to get storm water off a site as quickly as possible, without thinking about the guy next door.

sense of scale. Care was taken to establish a gradient of private, to semi-private, to public spaces. All these devices create a cozy RV-resort feel — reminiscent of the method of transportation favored by the Valley’s winter visitors.

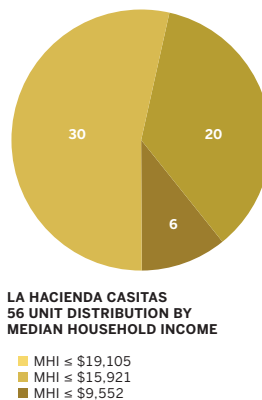
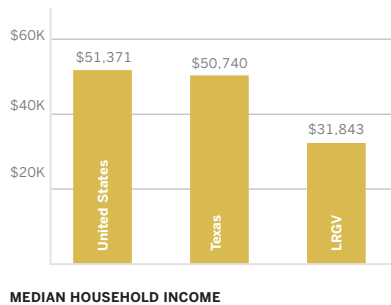
The success of La Hacienda Casitas highlights the much-needed redevelopment efforts



Left Water management is fundamental to the site planning. The landscape is designed to filter storm water through the bioswales twice before it enters the municipal drainage system. **Right** Native plants and rain gardens stitch the spaces between the buildings together. The colors of the facades were inspired by the Valley’s natural landscape.



All 56 units at La Hacienda Casitas serve families with household incomes that are less than 60 percent of the LRGV median income level.



that are happening along the Valley's Business 83 corridor. It's a step in the right direction as Harlingen grows westward and begins to reclaim and revitalize its lost rural fabric. The project is also a significant example of a progressive water management approach that is good for both the native grasses and flowers at La Hacienda Casitas, and the municipal water system that absorbs the much-reduced amount of storm water runoff.

Ultimately, bcWORKSHOP projects are about the common good. La Hacienda Casitas is no different. It has turned a property devastated by a hurricane into an active community. Because residents were only minimally represented during the design concept meetings (only six of the former housing complex's residents could be located for the early meetings), the architects have done extensive post-occupancy studies to understand how the buildings are working for the community. "This process does something more for us than just give us good design," said Mitchell-Bennett. "It also empowers and builds up people's self-esteem, dignity, and ownership."

Michael E. Allex, AIA, is principal of Rike Ogden Figueroa Allex (ROFA) Architects in Harlingen.

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Exceptional craft and a relationship with water characterize all of the projects in this issue. Water is a scarce commodity in Texas, and with the continuation of the relentless drought conditions across the state, water conservation and energy efficiency are increasingly important. The featured projects include examples of the seamless integration of high-tech mechanicals and well designed spaces.

PHOTO BY PAUL BARDAGJY.



Water

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A Sink in Every Room

by Jen Wong

Project Milk + Honey, Austin

Client Spa Partisan

Architects Baldrige Architects

Design Team R. Burton Baldrige, AIA; Brian Bedrosian; Michael Hargens; Tyler Frost

Photographer Casey Dunn



Salons, like all businesses, are driven by numbers. Alissa Bayer, owner of Milk + Honey in Austin, is well aware of the revenue that can be generated by a salon chair versus a manicure station or a spa treatment room. But unlike the \$5 barbershop around the corner, salons need also to convey the incalculable, elusive quality of the sublime. Clients must be drawn in, seduced, and compelled to return.

The architect, then, juggles the conflicting goals of maximizing profit by squeezing space and creating a transcendent experience by drawing it out. Add to this conundrum the hefty utilitarian demands of a salon — a sink in every room, washers and dryers operating nonstop, materials that can withstand abuse from essential oils and hair dyes, and extensive back-of-house requirements — and the balance quickly tips away from the transcendent.

For added fun, select a site with three exposed facades in a prominent downtown building (remember: half the clientele will be in robes) zoned

type 1A with a 4-ft grade change. The skill level on this puzzle now gets bumped from intermediate to advanced.

“It’s one of the hardest projects we’ve ever worked on,” said Burton Baldrige, AIA, of Baldrige Architects, who began design in August of 2011. The salon occupies the southeast corner of the western Silicon

The architect juggles the conflicting goals of maximizing profit by squeezing space and creating a transcendent experience by drawing it out.

Laboratories building, designed by Page (formerly PageSoutherlandPage) in 2002. Its major facades run along high-traffic Cesar Chavez Street to the south, with views of Lady Bird Lake beyond, and the more pedestrian-oriented Guadalupe Street to the east. Until construction began

Previous spread

left *The floating reception desk features an ADA-compliant writing platform that subtly traces the profile of a milk bottle.*

Right *The main lounge, at the heart of the plan, serves as transitional space between the locker rooms and individual service rooms.*

This page *Much maneuvering of the mechanical systems was required to achieve the 14-ft ceiling height in the salon.*



in July of 2012, the site was vacant, its undeveloped dirt floors an urban anomaly. Originally designated as restaurant space, the prominent corner suffered from delayed development of the mixed-use 2nd Street District.

The objective for the 7,116-sf project was to combine spa, salon, and company headquarters — previously scattered in different locations — under one roof. “Especially when you look at code requirements, everything needed to be so tight,” said Brian Bedrosian, the project designer. He fondly recalls the day that he “got to push the demising wall from the center of the column to the edge.”

Though modifications to the exterior were limited, Baldridge Architects was able to replace the Alucobond architectural cladding of the front entry with the same wood finish prevalent in the interior, bringing some of the salon’s identity out into the street. The entrance is located along Guadalupe Street, and one emerges onto the side of a long space that steps down to a lower level on the left. To the right is a floating reception desk, whose back partial wall both obscures and reveals the nail room beyond. Running parallel to the entrance is an extensive display wall composed of irregular vertical panels that accentuate the height of the space. Rift sawn white oak, in handsome contrast to the white millwork, runs above the display and warmly wraps the room and floors.

The primary gesture of the largely interior project is the thick, oak-clad wall that winds its way from the entry of the nail room, through the retail space, to the end of the hair salon. Each penetration through the wall is marked by an experiential shift and arrival into a new programmatic zone.

The zones follow conventional strategies of public/private divisions: The retail space, salon, and nail room occupy the visible perimeter of

Clients observe the urban activity outside, reflected in oversized mirrors, while pedestrians and vehicles get a voyeuristic panorama of the salon.

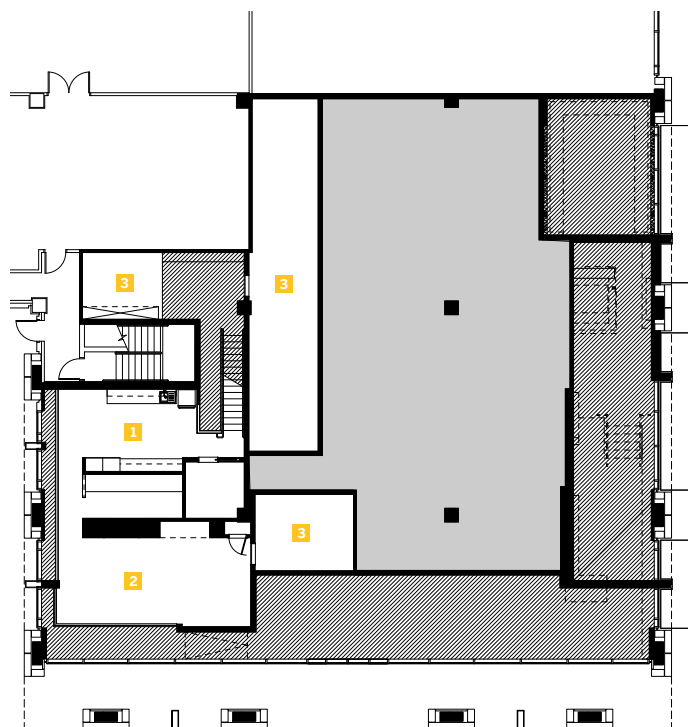
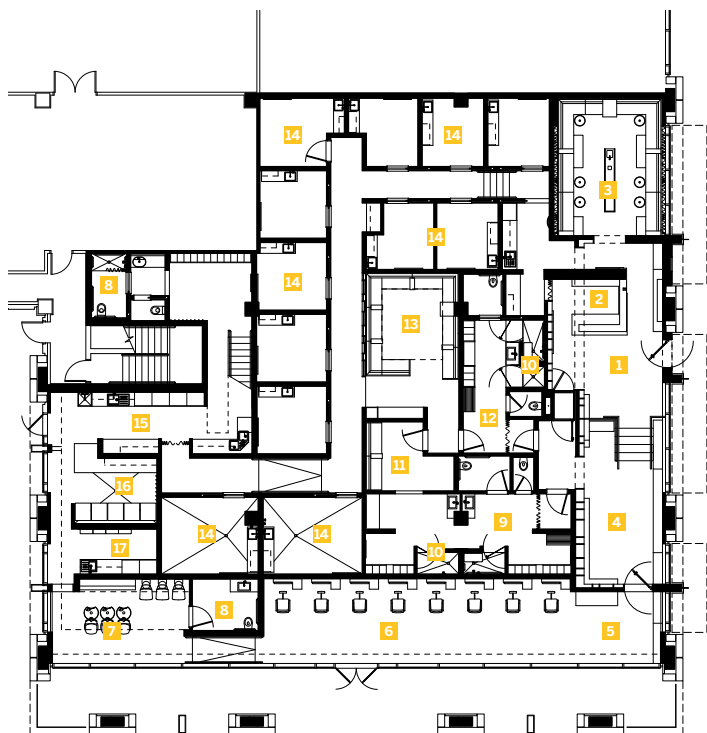
the project and are the brightest, liveliest spaces, while the locker rooms, lounge, and service rooms are nestled within — quiet, dim, and protected. The back-of-house operations weave behind the programmatic zones and occupy both the western edge along the building’s courtyard and a partial mezzanine.

The three client zones — salon, spa, and nail room — are accessible from the retail space. Crossing the oak wall threshold through a frosted glass door at the lower end, the salon features dark tile floors, ceilings that soar 14 ft, and southern-facing windows. The view here works two ways:



Top Rift sawn white oak serves as the predominant surface material, entering from the exterior and wrapping around the split-level retail space, through the salon, and into the locker rooms (see bottom left).

Bottom right The use of white oak was inspired by the material choice for previous Milk + Honey locations.



GROUND FLOOR

- 1 ENTRY/RECEPTION
- 2 RECEPTION DESK
- 3 MANI/PEDI AREA
- 4 SPA RETAIL/WAITING
- 5 SALON ENTRY
- 6 STYLING ROOM
- 7 SHAMPOO/DRYING
- 8 BATHROOM
- 9 WOMEN'S LOCKER ROOM
- 10 STEAM SHOWER
- 11 WOMEN'S LOUNGE
- 12 MEN'S LOCKER ROOM
- 13 MAIN LOUNGE
- 14 SPA SERVICES
- 15 EMPLOYEE KITCHEN/BREAK ROOM
- 16 HOUSEKEEPING
- 17 SALON BACK OF HOUSE

MEZZANINE

- 1 BREAK ROOM
- 2 MAIN OFFICE
- 3 MECHANICAL
- OPEN TO BELOW
- RUN/PLENUM SPACES ABOVE FINISHED CEILINGS





Previous page Sheer curtains adorn the symmetrical nail room and filter views from the street.

This page Striking artwork by Olive & Otis serves as a focal point, its faceted surface shifting with variations in daylight. The custom furniture was designed by the architects.

Clients observe the urban activity outside, reflected in oversized mirrors located at each of the stylist stations, while pedestrians and vehicles get a voyeuristic panorama of the salon.

One slips behind the reception desk and past the threshold wall to access the nail room, which is veiled from the street by sheer white curtains that softly filter daylight. The U-shaped seating configuration facilitates an intimate, communal camaraderie. At the end of the room hangs a striking

“I’m not a huge fan of whimsy,” said Baldrige. He is most satisfied with the cleverness of the plan, including the successful integration of the service programs.

focal point, an undulating tapestry constructed of faceted wood fabric. “As this is an axial room, whatever was on that wall was going to be extraordinarily important,” said Bedrosian.

The piece is one of twelve created by Olive & Otis, a local partnership formed by artists Michelle Bayer and Joyce Rosner. Inspired by microscopic topographies of the skin, they consider the pieces “a type of dermal mapping.” In other works, the wood membrane disappears, the internal scaffolding expressed in brass wire. The artwork is textured and rich,

providing a contrast to the controlled lines and smooth orthogonal planes of the architecture.

At the heart of the plan lies the spa, which offers clients respite and separation from the outside world. One first accesses the locker rooms through a break in the cabinetry wall, passing through a heavy curtain into a dimmer, wetter world. The lockers serve as a buffer to the main lounge, which is similar in plan to the nail room, though it exudes its own ambiance. The lounge serves as a transitional space for the 12 service rooms encircling it.

“I’m not a huge fan of whimsy,” said Baldrige. He is most satisfied with the cleverness of the plan, including the successful integration of the service programs. And perhaps surprisingly, the owner’s favorite part of the project is the back-of-house, due to its abundance of natural light, generous storage, and greatly improved functionality.

The project, completed in December of 2012, marked Baldrige Architects’ departure from the design-build model. Said Baldrige: “It was a great fortune for us to work on this project. As a result, the commercial work that we’re getting to do now is very deliberate, and the craft that we care so much about is rewarded.”

Jen Wong is director and curator of the University Co-op Material Resource Center at The University of Texas at Austin.

The Boatmakers' Craft

by Ingrid Spencer

Project Port Townsend House, Port Townsend, Wash.

Clients Jeff Jackson and Sally Warren

Architect Shipley Architects

Design Team Dan Shipley, FAIA; Christi Luter; Danielle Langston; Skyler J. Fike

Photographer Michael Burns

Port Townsend, Wash., is about as far from Dallas as you can get in the U.S., both literally and figuratively. With a population of around 9,000, the city is located at the northeastern tip of the Olympic Peninsula, about 40 miles northwest of Seattle. It's surrounded by water on three sides and is known for its Victorian buildings, boat-building industry, and vibrant arts scene. It seems an unlikely place for a Texas couple and their Texan architect-of-choice to end up building a house, but that's exactly what happened when Dallas-based Sally Warren and Jeff Jackson fell in love with Port Townsend. They decided to make it a new home for themselves, as well as a refuge for their two grown children, their friends, and family.

Despite the plethora of highly respected design firms in surrounding cities like Seattle and Tacoma, there was only one architect Warren and Jackson had in mind for their project: Dan Shipley, FAIA. From his Dallas office, Shipley had worked with the couple twice before, designing a ranch getaway for them in Bosque County near Waco and their home in the Highland Park neighborhood of Dallas. "We know Dan as someone







particularly sensitive to place,” says Warren. “We knew he would be able to understand the demands of the site, and what to embrace about the climate and views. We also knew he’d be sensitive to the neighborhood, as we didn’t want to destroy our neighbors’ views.”

The demands of the site were extensive. Warren and Jackson had enlisted the help of a local architecture firm to scour the area for a potential tract of land, at last settling on a 65-ft by 100-ft vacant lot with a long list of challenges. The property was completely overgrown with brush, difficult to access, and steep. Along with the rest of Port Townsend, it was located in a

“When you get contractors who are also carpenters, you’re steps ahead, but when you have people who have built boats, you’re way beyond that.”

seismic zone. Peter Bates and Aaron McGregor, who worked for the local firm, took on the task of clearing out some of the brush. They discovered four mature fir trees as well as the potential for sightlines to the water and Mt. Rainier from the site.

By the time they finished this part of the project, their local employer’s firm had folded, and Bates and McGregor started their own construction company, Good Homes Construction. Both men had boat-building backgrounds. Bates had even graduated from wooden-boat-building school and

had worked as a yacht rigger for five years. They brought a unique sensibility and knowledge of craftsmanship to residential construction.

Shipleigh visited the site and immediately recognized the project’s potential. The opportunity to work with Bates and McGregor was definitely not lost on the Dallas architect. “When you get contractors who are also carpenters, you’re steps ahead, but when you have people who have built boats, you’re way beyond that,” says Shipleigh. “I kept throwing these guys my best pitches, and they just kept knocking them back.”

Boat-building is in the DNA of Port Townsend, and more than a little of the craft went into this 2,900-sf house. According to Shipleigh, the design was vessel-like to begin with, with the unassuming shingled facade taking its place in scale among the houses on the street. The back of the house was also scaled to the surrounding environment, with windows framing views of water or land. There was wood everywhere, including a gangway-like ramp up to the front door.

Nestled among the four fir trees, the house is a U shape built into the slope, with an L-shaped basement wall that provides the shear resistance for the street-side facade. To address the slope and seismic issues, the foundation consists of concrete stem walls bearing onto spread footings dug into the hillside. Stone was brought in from Montana for three fireplaces, which also provide structural support. “The chimney mass — the fireplaces and chimneys extend up through it — is actually a cantilevered column of reinforced concrete block



Previous spread *The design, scale, and materials of the house were greatly informed by the steeply sloped site, with the understated front of the house fitting in with its neighbors.*

Opposite page *The rear of the house is scaled to frame views of water from the living room.*

This page clockwise *from top Vessel-like attributes begin at the entrance to the house, with a gangway-like ramp providing a practical and elegant solution to the steep grade. The view of the water from the deck adds to the nautical feel.*





- LOWER LEVEL**
- 1 ENTRY
 - 2 TERRACE
 - 3 KITCHEN
 - 4 STUDIO
 - 5 BATHROOM
 - 6 BEDROOM
 - 7 CLOSET
 - 8 STORAGE
 - 9 MECHANICAL

- MAIN LEVEL**
- 1 ENTRY
 - 2 LIVING ROOM
 - 3 DINING ROOM
 - 4 TERRACE
 - 5 KITCHEN
 - 6 UTILITY
 - 7 BATHROOM
 - 8 CLOSET
 - 9 BEDROOM
 - 10 MUDROOM
 - 11 OFFICE





that functions as the backbone of the house in that it provides the lateral support for the water-facing, mostly glass facade of the house,” says Shipley.

Essentially a two-bedroom house, the lower level is designed as guest quarters, with its own small kitchen and private entrance. Traversing the main level leads to several surprises, including a floor-to-ceiling window that frames one of the fir trees, a reading nook, a deck prism incorporated into the office window, and a wooden stepladder behind a hidden door that leads up to a sleeping loft. “There’s a feeling of being in an oceanliner in this house,” says Warren.

Wood dominates the material palette: Douglas fir for floor and doors; reclaimed cedar for exterior shingles and ceilings; and maple plywood on walls. One wall in the great room proves Bates and McGregor’s boat-building expertise: An extension of the ceiling, the cedar turns the corner and comes down the wall seemingly effortlessly, although Bates laughs at the word. “It takes an incredible amount of labor to get something to seem so simple,” he says. “But we were able to do some unconventional things in this house that we’re very proud of, like that cedar wall.” The other walls

An extension of the ceiling, the cedar turns the corner and comes down the wall seemingly effortlessly.

are nearly as impressive. Without any baseboards or crown molding, they seem to float off the floor. “We started with the middle panels and went from there on the walls,” says Bates. “We scribed them carefully because there’s nothing to hide mistakes.”

For Warren and Jackson, there is no mistake — the house provides them the perfect antidote to their existence in Dallas, where their house, although also beautifully designed by Shipley, is somewhat isolated from the street, not to mention landlocked and lacking the lush natural environment of Port Townsend. “Here, I can have the windows open all the time and hear the wind through the trees, or someone practicing piano next door or conversing as they walk by on the street,” says Warren, who hopes to one day retire to Port Townsend full time. “It’s our secret, alternate life.”

Ingrid Spencer writes about architecture from her new home in Austin’s Zilker neighborhood.



Opposite page *Different types of wood dominate the material palette, including reclaimed cedar shingles on the exterior.*

This page top *Wood is used throughout the interior; many of the walls are maple plywood.*

Middle *Cedar finishes the kitchen area, and there are Douglas fir floors throughout the home.*

Bottom *The cedar-clad inglenook provides a cozy place to read and hides a staircase to a sleeping loft above.*



Invisible Aquatics

by Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA

Project Cascading Creek House, Austin

Clients Brian and Cami Cobb

Architect Bercy Chen Studio

Design Team Calvin Chen, Assoc. AIA; Thomas Bercy; Tom Tornbjerg; Brad Purrington

Photographer Paul Bardagjy

The Cascading Creek House sits at the end of a cul-de-sac with its eponymous waterway beyond. Standing at the top of the sloped site, Thomas Bercy of Bercy Chen Studio explained that because of its steep topography, the triangular property receives a great deal of runoff. This water is channeled through large drains in the curvy driveway and along

The most impressive technological feature of the house is its water processing loop, which is the hidden pearl of the building.

a rocky passage on the north side of the house. Even in its site strategy, the project uses water management to explore the relationship between technology and architecture.

The house, opening to the south, consists of two bars set at an angle to each other with a deck and pool in the trapezoidal expanse between. Descending the steps at the property's entry, the experience of the house begins with the structure's paired roofs. They are painted a battleship gray, the color of the steel throughout the project. The northern roof deposits rainwater into a central trough, which is concealed by a line of solar thermal assemblies and culminates in a gigantic scupper that feeds an open cistern. According to Bercy, the visual and sonic impact of the dripping water creates an "Alhambra-esque atmosphere." If there is no rain, the scupper can be run artificially as a fountain. The southern roof supports catchment and an array of flat photovoltaic panels. These technical systems are present but suppressed, tightly integrated into the aesthetics of the house.

Previous spread *The custom steel scupper feeds the entry cistern and provides an introduction to the water conservation at work in the house.*

This page clockwise from top *The steel tube both houses a fireplace and conceals a column that facilitates the large expanse of glass opening out to the pool. Stepping down to the entry, one encounters the oculus and walks over a shallow pool before entering through the onyx door. Inside, the entry opens on the public wing to the left.*



Past the water feature and garage door, steps lead down again to the custom onyx front door. Inside, the view opens onto the deck and the wings of the house. A Death Star-like grey cylinder hides a coat closet and provides air supply and return vents above. There are four expressed structural tubes in the project. An additional fifth tube is absent but still powerful, figuratively slicing through the entry roof to create an oculus that allows sunlight onto the stained ipe wall.

The architects envisioned the project less as a house and more as an extension and outgrowth of the limestone and aquifers of Central Texas. Lueders limestone, consistent in its honeyed tone, is readily available locally and fits within the aquatic subtext of the house. The two wings of the house are each spined by a limestone wall, and the floors throughout the public spaces and hallways are limestone. Whereas the roof line is a constant datum, the interior floors step down with the grade, culminating in tall, glass-encased spaces. A floor datum of limestone is also maintained, which suggests moving down into the metaphorical stone base of the house.

Public spaces are located in the northern wing, with a combined kitchen, dining, and living area that spills down toward the creek. In the kitchen, the appliances are integrated into the white oak cabinetry. A stair leads to a subterranean “man cave,” complete with a wine cellar, home theater, and small gym. Along the outer wall of the living area, the roof is divorced from the limestone wall, allowing a line of clerestory windows that indirectly washes the wall in light.

The culminating overhanging roof is thin, the result of the use of steel tube laid on its longer side and additional support from tensioned cables that run back to a large steel column. This steel tube is a major structural

There are four expressed structural tubes in the project. An additional fifth tube is absent but still powerful, figuratively slicing through the entry roof to create an oculus that allows sunlight onto the stained ipe wall.

element but, in continuation of the house’s theme of uniting systems and aesthetics, it contains an additional column within that leaves enough space to house a fireplace. From the living room, the tube is massive but useful. Seen from above, it awkwardly punctures the plane of the roof; however, the scale works from the pool deck, where the illusion of the floating ceiling is preserved.

Bedrooms are located in the western wing of the house. Particular care was taken with the visual alignments between the two parts of the residence. The play area between the two children’s bedrooms, for example, opens onto the deck, allowing a parent in the living room to easily glance across the courtyard to check on the kids. A pocket courtyard separates the master suite from the kids’ rooms and provides a meditative setting for the master bathroom. The master bedroom is supported by a large millwork closet installation and, finally, opens out onto the descending lawn.

The house itself is impressive for its luxurious dimensions and attention to detail. While the principal construction was handled by Spencer Construction, Bercy Chen’s team completed important feature items such as the specialty doors, steel window frames, deck, pool, and custom sustainable systems. What is most interesting is the tight coordination of the various systems in support of the lifestyle that the house invites, as seen in the two



Top Stained ipe clads the deck and conceals an outdoor kitchen.

Center The singular dining and living room steps down with the grade of the site and features a hidden clerestory that washes the wall with light.

Bottom A discreet stair to the lower floor is hidden by the white oak millwork in the kitchen.

wall-recessed iPads that control the temperature, lighting, music, and water features throughout the project. The relationship of technology to architecture is an ongoing interest for the office of Bercy Chen, but this project was taken even further by the client, who is fascinated with systems. Bercy recalls, “He pushed us to get more energy-efficient and to integrate technology into the house.”

The most impressive technological feature of the house is its water processing loop, which is the hidden pearl of the building. Rainwater is collected on the roofs and runs into the cistern before being stored in a 30,000-gallon tank buried on the west side of the site. The water is filtered and then circulated in the pool. Ingeniously, the pool is used as a massive heat sink, with a heat pump that translates the water’s thermal properties into energy used to heat or cool the air inside the house. This water, once its thermal capacity is delivered, is then cycled back into the system. The same water is also used to irrigate the landscaping. Another custom assembly uses the phase change properties of paraffin wax to harvest additional energy from the pool. Copper tubing runs through a vat of wax; the wax absorbs energy as it liquefies (during the day, for example, when the pool water is hot). When the wax later re-solidifies, it releases this energy, which can be used to heat the house. This method of energy storage is significantly more efficient than using water to perform the same thermodynamic task.

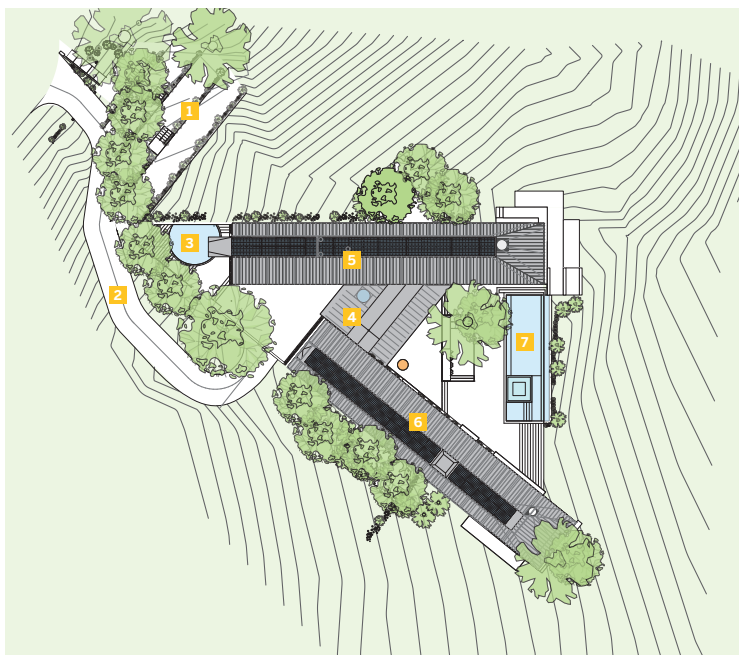
The main vault for these systems is accessed through a secret door in the stained ipe deck adjacent to the pool. “This is absolutely crazy!” Thomas Bercy exclaimed before disappearing down the ladder to show

This is an intense amount of infrastructure for a residential project, and evidence of the massive effort required both to realize and then to conceal this network of systems.

off the configuration. Inside the small concrete room, one is surrounded by the requisite maze of pipes, valves, filters, and pumps that comprise the system itself. This is an intense amount of infrastructure for a residential project, and evidence of the massive effort required both to realize and then to conceal this network of systems. Even more amazingly, Bercy Chen completed the design of these custom features in-house without the use of a consultant.

While the complexity of this particular installation is not one that Thomas Bercy is eager to repeat, some of the ideas — the use of the pool as a heat sink, the ambitious planting strategy, the literal division of the house into public and private sectors — are captured on a smaller scale in Bercy Chen’s Edgelands House (featured in the January/February 2014 issue of *TA*). The Cascading Creek House, then, exists as a prototype, one enabled by the interests of the client and his ample budget.

The environmental features — the aquatic loop, tight insulation, and deep overhangs — definitely help to mitigate the operating costs of the house, but they exist alongside other items as amenity gadgets. It is clear that the reasons for such impressive features originate from technical fascination, not an overriding concern for sustainability. Here, the design skill lies in how well these pieces of technology are concealed within their larger spatial articulation. Seamless integration, Bercy said, was pursued in order “not to distract from home’s architectural value,” and to preserve its poetry, ambiance, and atmospheric qualities.

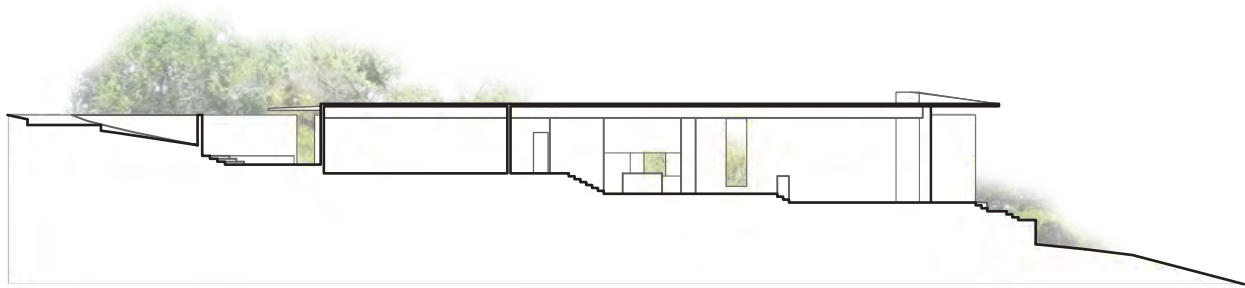


- SITE PLAN**
- 1 ENTRY
 - 2 DRIVEWAY
 - 3 ENTRY POND/CISTERN
 - 4 FRONT DOOR
 - 5 NORTHERN ROOF
 - 6 SOUTHERN ROOF
 - 7 POOL

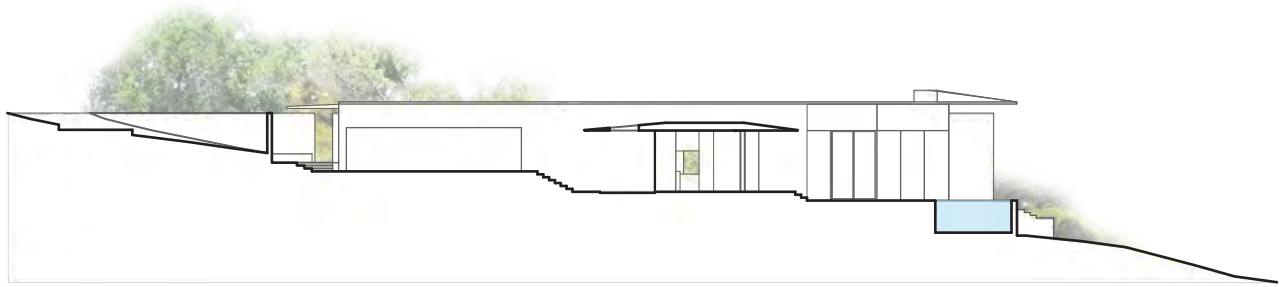


Opposite page *From the entry steps, the experience of the house begins with the structure's paired roofs.*

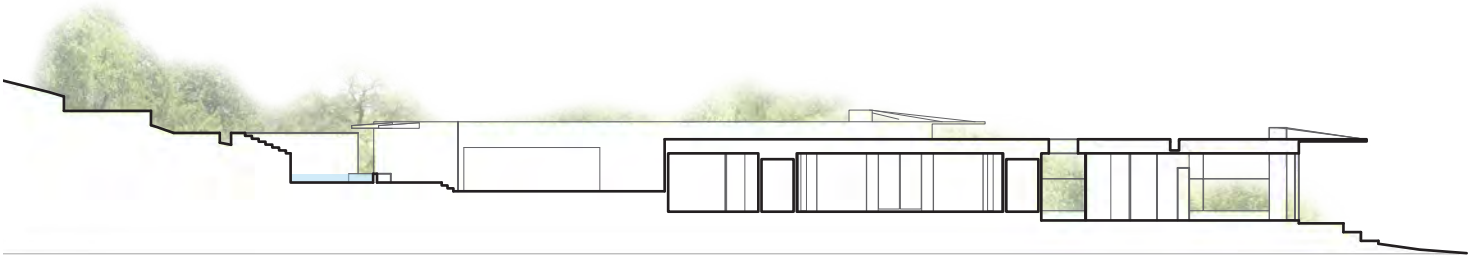
This page *Outdoor spaces are terraced down to the sloping lawn, both to connect the building to the ground with landscaping and to avoid the use of railings.*



SECTION THROUGH PUBLIC
NORTH WING



SECTION THROUGH ENTRY AND
COURTYARD



SECTION THROUGH SOUTHERN
PRIVATE WING



Top left *A pocket courtyard with a skylight provides a meditative setting for the master bathroom.*

Top right *The master bedroom is supported by a large piece of white oak millwork and features a tubular fireplace and glazing similar to the living room.*

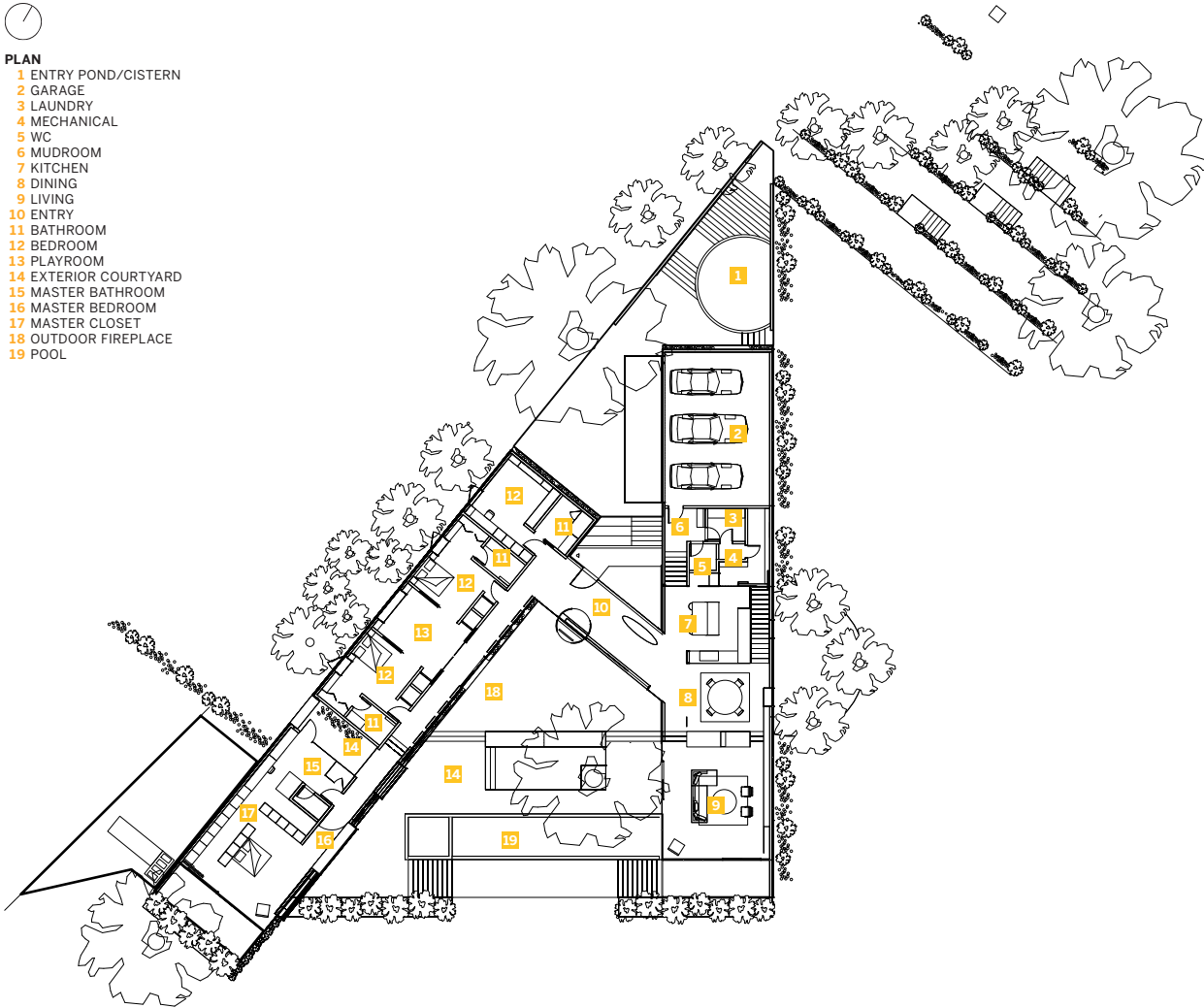
Right and opposite page *The infinity-edge pool, the outdoor focus of the house, is filled using filtered rainwater. Ingeniously, the pool is a massive heat sink, with a heat pump that translates the water's thermal properties into energy to heat or cool the air inside the house. The environmental systems are hidden in vaults below the ipe deck.*





PLAN

- 1 ENTRY POND/CISTERN
- 2 GARAGE
- 3 LAUNDRY
- 4 MECHANICAL
- 5 WC
- 6 MUDROOM
- 7 KITCHEN
- 8 DINING
- 9 LIVING
- 10 ENTRY
- 11 BATHROOM
- 12 BEDROOM
- 13 PLAYROOM
- 14 EXTERIOR COURTYARD
- 15 MASTER BATHROOM
- 16 MASTER BEDROOM
- 17 MASTER CLOSET
- 18 OUTDOOR FIREPLACE
- 19 POOL



The approach used here is an interesting foil to Bjarke Ingels' concept of hedonistic sustainability. The philosophy posits that sustainable actions can increase quality of life and overturns the medicinal assumption that going green needs to hurt for it to be properly effective. The recent built work of

It is clear that the reasons for such impressive features originate from technical fascination, not an overriding concern for sustainability.

Bjarke Ingels Group makes good on this approach, but the idea is still recreationally didactic and therefore intrusive in the context of a private residence.

What is most powerfully captured in the Cascading Creek House is the sleek concealment of mechanics, literally under the hood of a gorgeous space. Any hint of systems intrigue is either mysteriously decadent — as in the case of the initial giant scupper — or suppressed entirely, a kind of stealth green that innovates while maintaining the desired level of comfort. Over 90 years ago, Le Corbusier wrote, “A house is a machine for living in.” What kind of machine do you want?

Jack Murphy, Assoc. AIA, lives in Austin and practices architecture at Baldrige Architects.



Subtle Layers

by Heather McKinney, FAIA

Project Torcasso Residence, Santa Fe, N. M.

Clients Rick and Cynthia Torcasso

Architect Page (formerly PageSoutherlandPage)

Design Team Lawrence W. Speck, FAIA; Daniel Brooks, AIA; Chad Johnson; Justin Sabatini; Bruce Loethen; Wendy Dunnam Tita, AIA

Photographer Robert Reck



Once Rick and Cynthia Torcasso found this property and made the commitment to move from Dallas to Santa Fe, they went scouting for an architect who shared their interest in fitting a house into the dominant landscape. Conversations with Lawrence Speck, FAIA, principal at Page (formerly PageSoutherlandPage), convinced them that they had found a kindred soul. The ensuing design and construction process is a saga of high collaboration between owner, designers, craftsmen, and artist driven by the goal of producing a refined dwelling that both blends with its setting and allows its inhabitants to fully experience the ever-changing panorama of sky, mountain, and desert around it.

Most architects both aspire to and dread the idea of working in Santa Fe due to its infamous architectural ordinances inspired by the traditional, small-windowed adobe houses in the historic core of the city. The Torcassos' land was further constrained by tight neighborhood architectural restrictions written into the property deed. Colors and materials were prescribed and

very limited. Equally confining were the requirements to break down the form into smaller perceived components by articulating the wall planes or by actually constructing multiple smaller buildings on the site. It is commendable that

The first major move in the design was to position the house below the ridge of the hillside.

this house bucks the stereotypes and yet succeeds in doing what the rules were designed to accomplish: It fits within its setting without distraction.

The first major move in the design was to position the house below the ridge of the hillside. Entry to the house is either via a side slither along a narrow courtyard drive, or via a dramatic exterior stairway, which extends from the high cul-de-sac down into a secret garden. The first approach lines one up with a spine that drives the length of the house and introduces all the major material themes. The second approach sweeps one through

Previous spread *The Torcasso residence in Santa Fe has exceptional rammed earth walls and sits inconspicuously on the hillside.*

This page clockwise from top *Ipe deck and shade structure overlooking mountains. Exterior staircase descends from street to sequestered garden and house. View of the stair from the garden.*

Opposite page from top *The dining area is defined by the Margo Sawyer art walls. The central living space of house communicates with exterior stair to the right and ipe deck to the left.*





the glassy middle of the house and sets up the dramatic framed vista of mountain and sky.

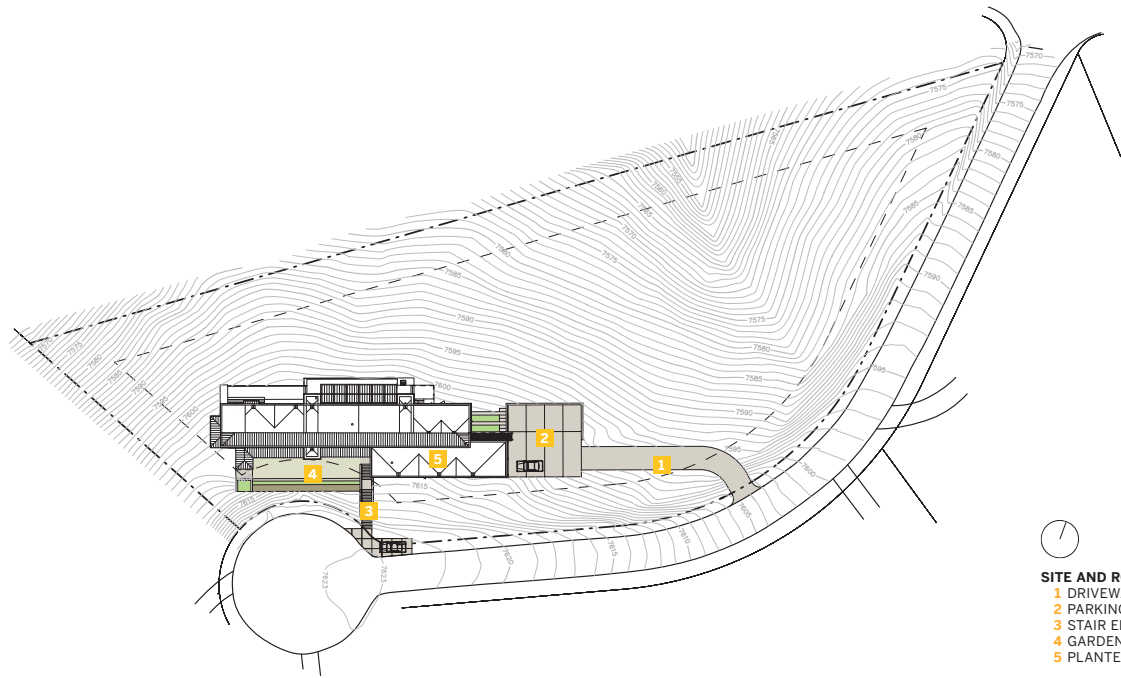
Rick Torcasso is an avid gardener, and so the siting of the house was also designed to provide him with three landscape palettes: subtle augmentation of the natural vegetation surrounding the house; rooftop meadows that welcome the eye from that uphill stairway; and the sequestered garden that is carved from the space between craggy hillside and house. This garden,

The second approach sweeps one through the glassy middle of the house and sets up the dramatic framed vista of mountain and sky.

in particular, is a feast of unusual drought-resistant plants. In its contained ribbon of space, it is a perfect foil to the exploded openness of the opposite side of the house — a garden of delight for quiet meditation. As for the rooftop meadows, the architecture literally disappears. In the case of the secret garden, the house forms a strong complementary wall to the rock cliff, riffing off its open face with the horizontal striations of wood and rammed earth.

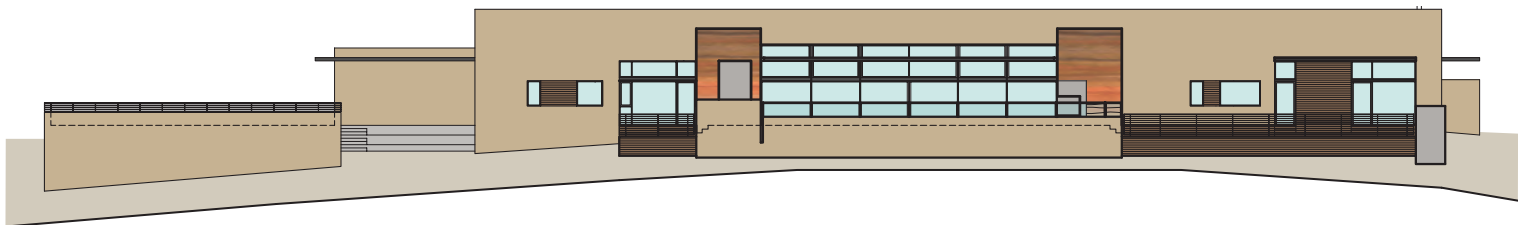
The second major design move is these two rammed-earth forms, set perpendicular to the long spine of the house. These forms do so many things eloquently: They solve the Santa Fe requirement to break the linear rectangle of the house. They transmit sun warmth into the interior and mitigate diurnal temperature differentials. In plan, they enclose the “ser-





SOUTH AND NORTH ELEVATIONS

- CONCRETE
- GLASS
- STUCCO
- HARDWOOD SIDING
- RAMMED EARTH





vant” (in Louis Kahn’s lexicon) spaces. Most powerfully, they are a sensual interpretation of the landscape beyond.

The layers of color come from earth on the property and in the region. Finding and selecting the material was a project for the subcontractor, Speck, and Bruce Loethen, manager of the construction administration for Page. Mock-ups fine-tuned the color selections and the layering order. The result is a silky, banded surface that begs to be touched and requires no other embellishment. The perfection of the surface texture comes from

The layers of color come from earth on the property and in the region. The result is a silky, banded surface that requires no other embellishment.

reusable steel formwork and the embedded metal plates that reduce the expansion joints to imperceptible seams. The craftsmanship is the work of a relatively young guy who, according to Speck, had apprenticed with the very best rammed-earth master in the region. “His teacher came out of retirement to give sage advice on this project, and the new generation came through with flying colors,” noted Speck.

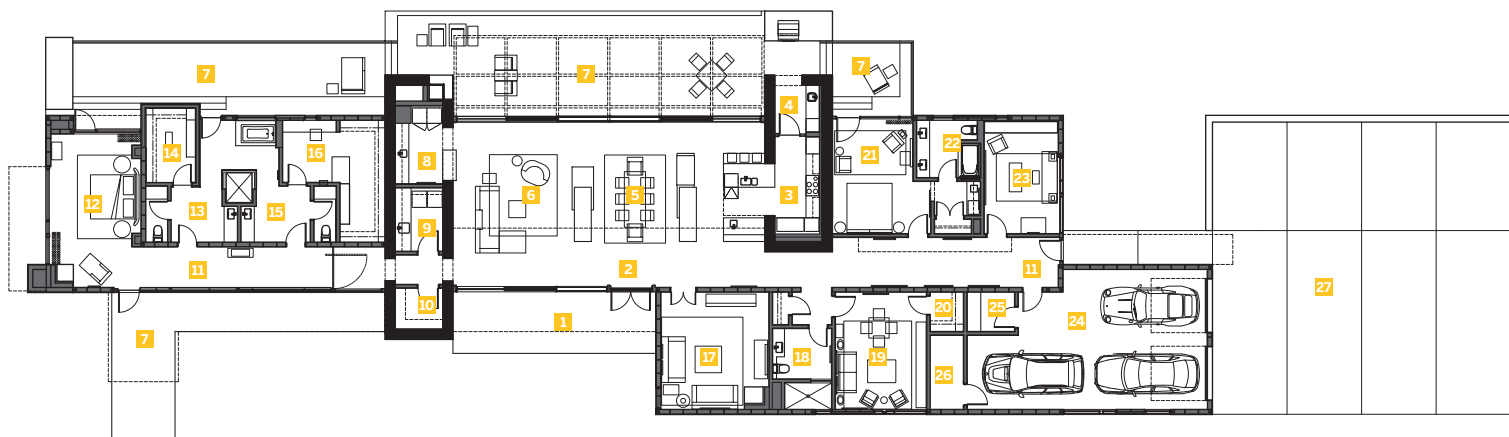
The house is consistent in its material choices. The striped ipe wood, diamond-polished concrete floors, Venetian plaster walls, and neutral glass-tiled bathroom walls are soothing and textural, as are the fabrics and furnishings, which were designed and coordinated by architect Wendy Dunnam Tita, AIA. The exquisite interiors bring us to the third major move of the design, the bold Margo Sawyer-designed/Mark Maček-built art compartments, which delineate the living room space. Sawyer and Speck collaborated on an earlier iteration of these stacked-cube forms in their Discovery Green project in Houston. Independently, they both had experimented with similar constructs earlier in their careers and found that their mutual fascination came from admiring Donald Judd’s work. Speck commented: “Margo and I have worked together enough now that we can



Opposite page *Images from above looking down into garden.*

Top *Portion of rooftop gardens with dormant native grasses (a wildflower meadow in spring, summer, and fall).*

Bottom *Early photo of the garden before native species matured.*



FIRST FLOOR PLAN

- 1 ENTRY COURT
- 2 ENTRY
- 3 KITCHEN
- 4 OUTDOOR KITCHEN
- 5 DINING ROOM
- 6 LIVING ROOM
- 7 TERRACE
- 8 BAR
- 9 LAUNDRY
- 10 STORAGE
- 11 GALLERY
- 12 MASTER BEDROOM
- 13 HIS BATHROOM
- 14 HIS CLOSET
- 15 HER BATHROOM
- 16 HER CLOSET
- 17 MEDIA ROOM
- 18 POWDER ROOM
- 19 LIBRARY
- 20 CLOSET
- 21 GUEST BEDROOM
- 22 GUEST BATHROOM
- 23 OFFICE
- 24 GARAGE
- 25 STORAGE
- 26 MECHANICAL ROOM
- 27 PARKING COURT





easily communicate intuitively as well as verbally. We have a mutual trust and respect for each other's capabilities that makes a collaboration much deeper than could ever be achieved in an initial teaming."

In this house, light animates much of the space, and the Sawyer compartments create a balance by inserting color where there is the least amount of natural light. Sawyer has a mastery of color, and she looked for inspiration in the wildflowers and the broader landscape. Although this was a very dif-

A singular example of the attention to detail is the immaculate deck overlooking the mountains.

ferent palette than she was accustomed to, Sawyer, Maček, Dunnam Tita, and Speck produced mock-ups that confirmed the power of the mix. Like the rammed-earth walls, these art pieces double as storage compartments, with their boxes invisibly hinged by Maček. As the design for the house and landscape developed, Sawyer was asked to complement these art pieces with colored light boxes strewn in the secret garden.

It is a testament to the clients that they set the tone for the house — it is highly resolved with no unnecessary details cluttering the view. This attitude permeated the design and became the touchstone of the construction. A singular example of the care and attention to detail is the immaculate linear ipe deck overlooking the mountains. The decking is invisibly joined by metal disc splines, rather than surface screws. At the end of the project, driven by his own anxiety that a random board-end might warp fractionally over time and ruin the elegance of the surface, superintendent David Campbell of J.M. Evans Construction, returned to the house to personally screw down the ends and cover the countersunk screws with ipe plugs.

The house is masterful — and masterfully subtle — in its landscape. As one stands on the deck at sunset, a pinyon wood fire in the corner kiva, the house is one with its hillside and the glow in the sky.

Heather McKinney, FAIA, is principal of McKinney York Architects in Austin.



Opposite page clockwise from top Photos show the master bedroom, master bath, and guest room with its serene rammed earth wall.

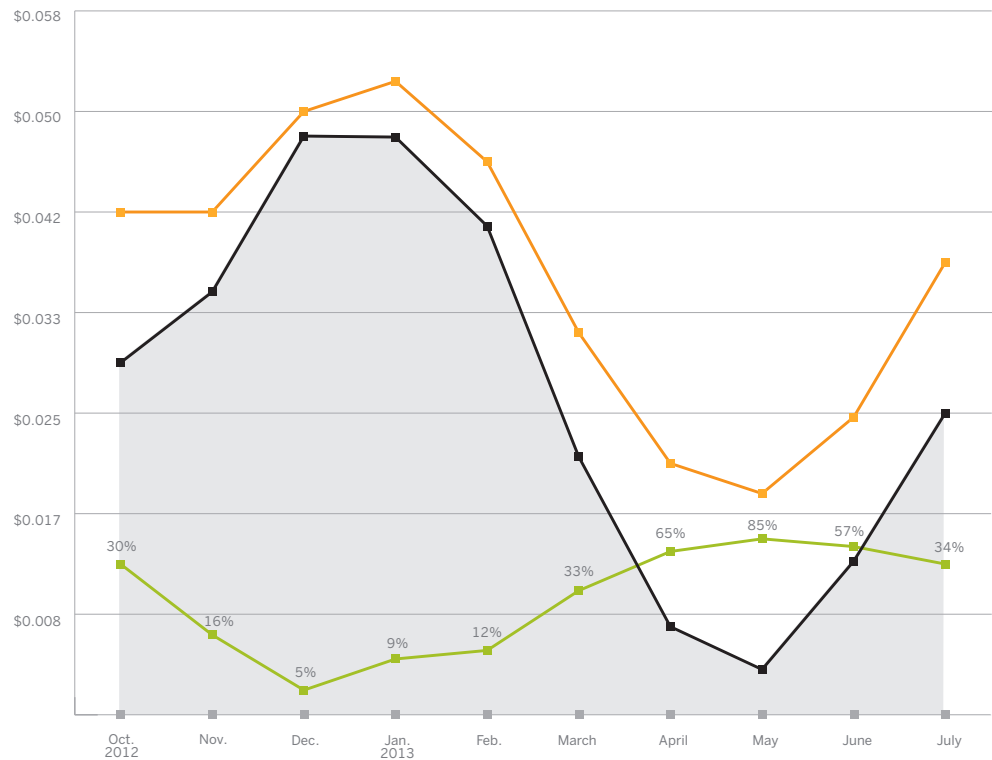
This page clockwise from top Images capture sunset on the deck, the gallery spline with Venetian plaster walls, and the living room.



Optimizing Energy Conservation

Over the course of the first year in their new home, Rick and Cynthia Torcasso have been experimenting with optimizing the building's energy consumption. They immediately noticed a significant difference in the overall cost of energy: When they compared the monthly bills for the Santa Fe home (see graph to the right) to those of their similarly-sized home in Dallas, even after taking into account any difference in local rates, they were saving a considerable amount of money. During the period from October 2012 to July 2013, energy costs for the Santa Fe residence were half the costs of the Dallas house during the winter months and less than one-sixth the costs of the Dallas bills during the summer.

The couple went through a process of figuring out how to best take advantage of the thermal properties of their rammed earth house. In July 2013, Santa Fe's high temperatures were in the 90s and lows were in the 60s. The house was consuming a very minor amount of energy for air conditioning, but they knew that this energy would be used most efficiently if the cool night air were allowed in, as much as possible, in the summer. Beginning in the middle of July, the Torcassos started leaving the big sliding glass doors in the living area open at night. The circulating air allowed the rammed earth walls to cool down much more quickly, and they tended to stay that way, keeping interior spaces cool even when it got hot the next day. By the end of the month, their air conditioning consumption had dropped — to zero. ■



TORCASSO SANTA FE RESIDENCE ELECTRIC USAGE

■ TOTAL CONSUMPTION (DOLLAR COST PER SF)
 ■ TOTAL BILL WITH SOLAR CREDITS INCLUDED (DOLLAR COST PER SF)
 ■ PERCENTAGE OF ON-SITE SOLAR CONTRIBUTION

Actual costs for electric usage at the house have been consistently reduced notably during the spring months.

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— Al York, AIA, principal,
McKinney/York Architects, Austin

Kent R. Hance
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Sylvan Beach Pavilion - 1957

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A restored dance pavilion on the Gulf Coast and the new landscape of a mid-century home designed by O'Neil Ford in San Antonio make up our discussion on rehabilitation. Both projects were executed with extreme care, respecting the buildings' historic fabric and contexts. They are also both successful examples of how the old and new can coexist.

PHOTO BY SHAULIN HON.



Rehabilitation

72

**A Coastal Bend
Reinvention**
Sylvan Beach Pavilion,
La Porte
Kirksey Architecture
Ben Koush

76

Water's Edge
Rockridge Gardens,
San Antonio
Tobin Smith Architect
Candid Rogers, AIA





A Coastal Bend Reinvention

by Ben Koush

Project Sylvan Beach Pavilion, La Porte

Client Harris County Precinct Two

Architect Kirksey Architecture

Design Team Benito Guerrier, AIA; Doug Hammel, AIA; Kathleen Jircik, AIA; Luis Perez; Edgar Alvarado; Melika Mirzakhani; Kevin Hambly

Photographer Shau Lin Hon

The recent rehabilitation of the Sylvan Beach Pavilion, a 1950s contemporary dance hall overlooking Galveston Bay in La Porte, stands out as a noteworthy example of responsible stewardship of the modern architectural heritage in the Houston metropolitan area. Inaugurated in May 1956, the building was designed by the progressive but short-lived Houston architectural firm of Greacen & Brogniez. Three years later, the firm would also go on to design Houston's first all-glass office tower. In its day, the Sylvan Beach Pavilion was recognized for its design locally and nationally. In its first year, it won a medal of honor from AIA Houston, and in 1957, it was featured in two prominent magazines: *Architectural Record* and *Arts & Architecture*.

The 22-acre, privately owned Sylvan Beach Park was the location of a succession of recreational buildings dating back to the 1890s that had all been destroyed by hurricanes. Harris County acquired the park in 1954 and began planning a modern beach pavilion. The new facility, expressly intended to be stormproof, was designed as a collection of crisply defined, geometric elements, each of which housed a different part of the program. Its main component was a circular, 125-ft-diameter ballroom with continuous glass walls allowing extensive views of the park and the bay beyond. The dance floor was raised on concrete *pilotis* to mitigate the effects of storm flooding, which can surge up to 12 or 14 feet in

that area. The ballroom was capped by a daringly thin, 4.5-in-thick reinforced concrete-shell construction supported by eight perimeter concrete columns. A large, triangular wood deck projected out over the bay from a rectangular ancillary wing containing a bar and restrooms. Entry to the facility was originally made via a ground-level stair encased in a glass block cube.

The design of the Sylvan Beach Pavilion is intriguing for the dialectical way that it integrated the vernacular circular dance hall form — a Central Texas building typology that strongly expressed its structure — with the modern movement's functionalism and innovative thin-shell concrete construction technology. In fact, the preference for such thin-shell structures during the postwar years, notably along the Texas coast, was detailed in a special issue of *Texas Architect* in September 1963, which included a portfolio of exuberantly shaped buildings that according to the editors exemplified "The Coastal Bend Revolution."

Hurricanes are a common occurrence along the Gulf of Mexico, and the Sylvan Beach Pavilion has weathered many storms, including the devastating hurricanes Carla and Alicia in 1961 and 1983. But when the building was heavily damaged by Hurricane Ike in 2008, the then Harris County Precinct 2 Commissioner Sylvia Garcia decided not to make the repairs necessary to reopen it. The county government instead tried to demolish the building in order



Opposite page Today, the dance hall has a clear view to Galveston Bay. A glass entry replaced a non-original enclosed entry ramp, which blocked nearly one-third of the window wall.

Left The deck features a reconstructed brick bar. The original wavy, concrete canopy was restored.

Middle The window wall system meets windstorm insurance requirements.

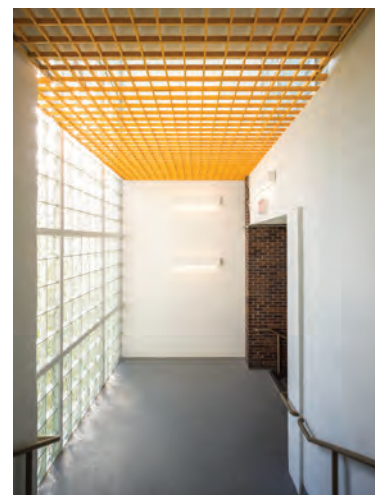
Bottom The glass blocks at the former ground-level entry were rehabilitated, and the suspended grid inside the former entry was reconstructed.

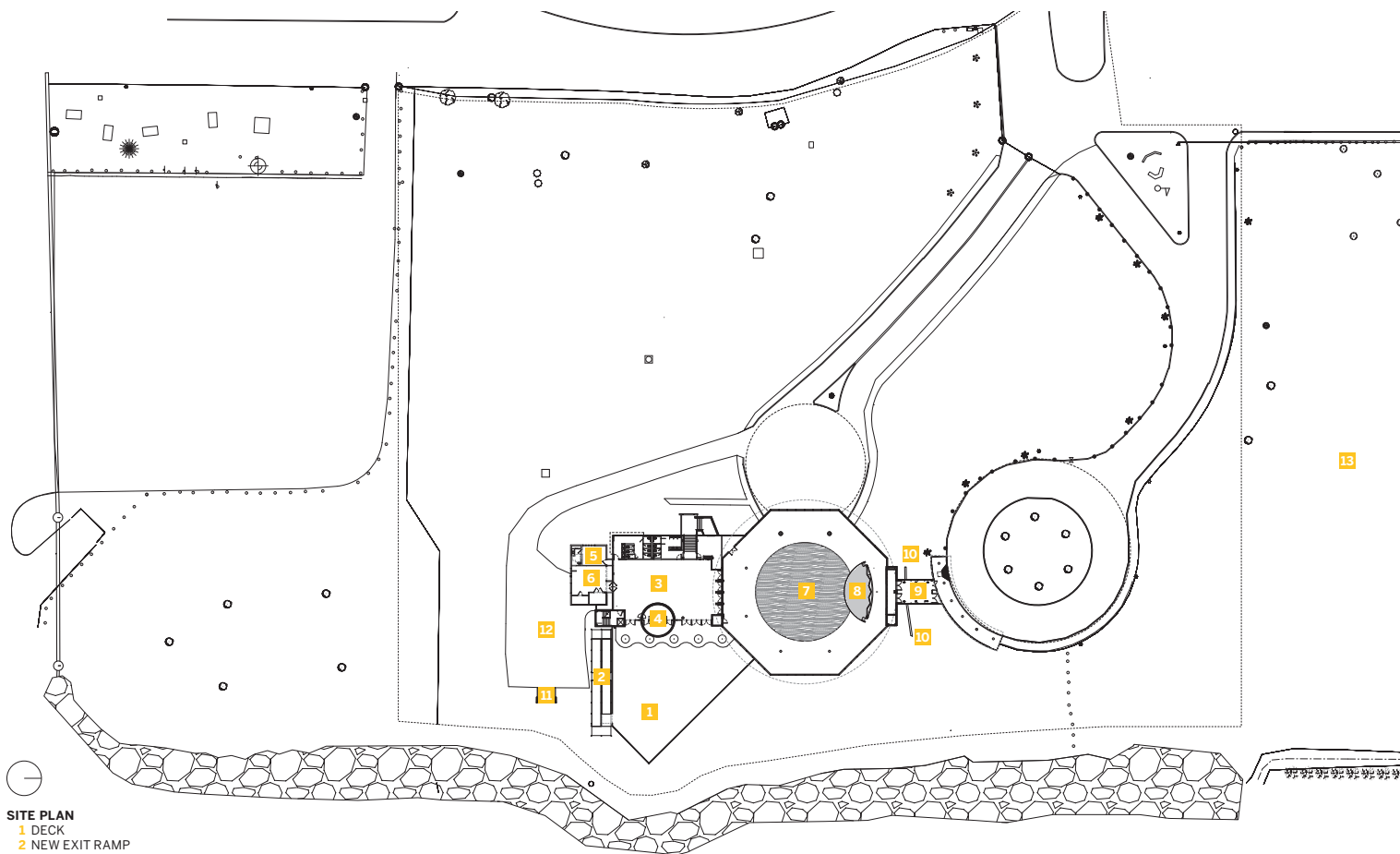
to make room for a proposed hotel and convention center. This move triggered an aggressive grassroots campaign, during which, despite the county's objections, the Sylvan Beach Pavilion was listed on the National Register of Historic Places in September 2010. In November that same year, Garcia was ousted by newcomer Jack Morman, who was sympathetic to the building's plight. Shortly after taking office in early 2011, Morman applied for United States Department

The design team worked with the manufacturer to custom-fabricate a window assembly that was tested for hurricane-standard air and water infiltration.

of Housing and Urban Development funding allocated for rehabilitation during storm rebuilding. With a substantial federal grant in place, work according to a plan by Kirksey Architecture began in 2012, and the pavilion was reopened in October 2013.

Kirksey's team was sympathetic to the design of the building. Their main concern was technical: The building had to be more storm-resistant than it had been in the past, and the structure needed to meet current code requirements. The team accomplished this by expanding on the original architects' design. The new interven-

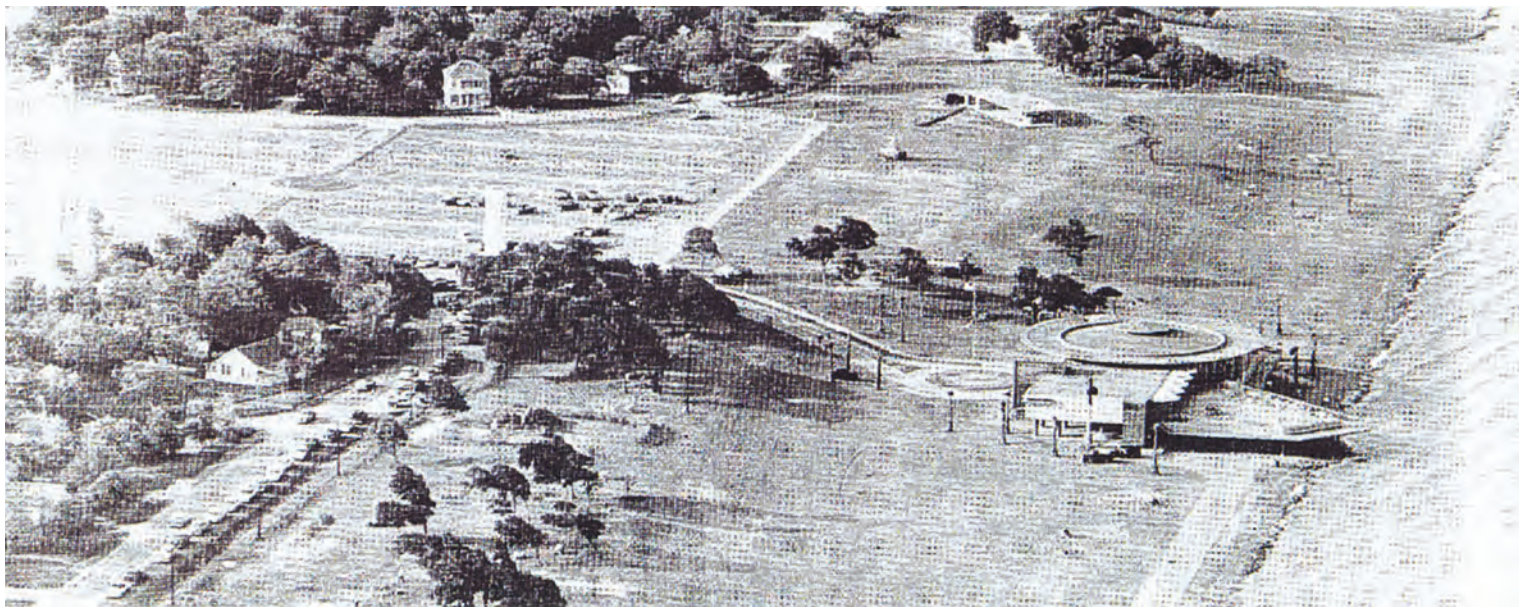




SITE PLAN

- 1 DECK
- 2 NEW EXIT RAMP
- 3 FOYER
- 4 WET BAR
- 5 BRIDE'S ROOM/OFFICE
- 6 CATERING SPACE
- 7 BANQUET HALL
- 8 STAGE
- 9 NEW ENTRY BRIDGE
- 10 WOOD RETAINING WALL
- 11 SUMP PUMP
- 12 PARKING LOT
- 13 SYLVAN BEACH PARK





tions are largely custom-designed and in keeping with the design of the original building.

In order to combat water infiltration, mitigate damaging, high-speed winds during future storms, and meet windstorm insurance requirements, various modifications to the buildings systems were introduced. Although the original glass wall system was designed to withstand storm-force wind, it had deteriorated and needed to be replaced. To meet code requirements, the new window frames had to be thicker than the originals in profile. The design team worked with the manufacturer to custom-fabricate a window assembly that was tested for hurricane-standard air and water infiltration and then reviewed by the Texas Historical Commission for visual appropriateness.

New sump pumps were added to drain water from the ground level. The concrete structure, which was in surprisingly good condition, received an acrylic coating to prevent chlorides in storm- and floodwaters from penetrating and weakening the concrete. In the ground-level areas, the original brick walls were left exposed, and the concrete floors were painted with an anti-skid coating. No sheetrock or carpeting was installed.

Architectural changes included the reconstruction of the triangular deck with a wood ramp for handicapped access tucked discreetly along one side of it. In the reception area, the circular bar made of multicolored glazed brick was rebuilt according to the original plans. Colors throughout were repainted according to historic

photographs and Greacen & Brogniez's original finish schedule. An intrusive, non-original wood entry canopy, which extended over a third of the glass wall facing the bay, was removed. A smaller vestibule, encased in glass block, was built to open directly behind the stage, and a polycarbonate aluminum-framed window wall was installed along the edge of an existing cast-in-place concrete canopy at the new entry, protecting guests from the afternoon and evening winds rolling off the bay. The project is a sensitive and smart rehabilitation that respects the original design intent while meeting current codes.

On a closing note, one cannot help but see parallels between this project and that other white elephant owned by Harris County, the Astrodome. Although the likelihood of using federal storm relief funds for its rehabilitation seems



Historic photographs show the pavilion just after construction was completed.

The project is a sensitive and smart rehabilitation that respects the original design intent while meeting current codes.

remote, one can only hope that, through successful examples like the Sylvan Beach Pavilion, the county leadership can begin to understand the importance of Houston's architectural heritage to its citizens and make plans to save it.

Ben Koush is a Houston-based architect and critic.



Water's Edge

by Candid Rogers, AIA

Project Rockridge Gardens, San Antonio

Clients Emma and Toby Calvert

Architect Tobin Smith Architect

Design Team Tobin Smith, AIA; J. Brantley Hightower, AIA

Photographers Kemp Davis and Mark Menjivar

Embedded in a cliff, a concrete spline ties a rock wall into stable ground and supports a perfectly pitched pool jutting out above a park basin.

The newly fortified landscape, with its sublime view, is the rear garden of a 1958 O'Neil Ford-designed home.

Tobin Smith, AIA, principal of Dado Group, designed the new garden. The project addressed the integration of the front parking court, intimate inner courtyards, and rear garden. With a restrained material palette, Smith was able to articulate the grounds as a harmonizing architectural landscape of linear elements that work seamlessly with the mid-century house.

Tile, rock, and steel surfaces weave around the house, through the inner courts, and out onto the great platform that is the central pool. The precise stitching of the paving reflects the many lines of Ford's brick masonry walls, echoing the interior spaces of the outdoor site. The tactile

experience offers richness in its composition. New elements are employed with great subtlety, creating a layered experience. And this play with emotions is most strongly felt at dawn and dusk.

The house is oriented along a 60-ft-high cliff. Smith was charged with stabilizing a failing retaining wall and extending the ground plane

The pool appears to float out over the cliff, infinitely extending the figurative space from the house's entry to the landscape beyond.

closer to the cliff's edge. The garden's plan celebrates the central axis of the house. A new plinth supports a remarkable new central patio — the "runway terrace" — offering a view outward from the main entry of the house, through its



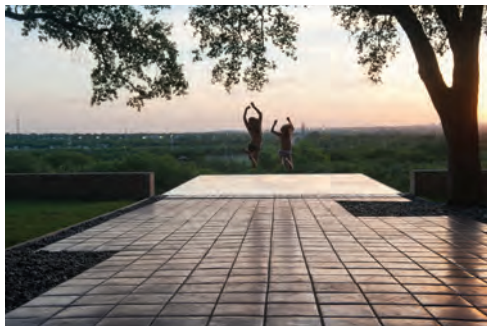
Opposite page *The runway terrace is magical at sunset.*

Left *The plinth is anchored into the cliff.*

Bottom left *Children can get a running start before jumping into this pool.*

Center *The pool is on axis with the house's entry and central core.*

Right *The new fountain provides an exceptional sensory experience at night.*



SITE PLAN

- 1 ENTRY DRIVE
- 2 EXISTING CARPORT
- 3 VISITOR PARKING/PLAY COURT
- 4 EXISTING RESIDENCE
- 5 COVERED ENTRY
- 6 KITCHEN COURT
- 7 DINING COURT
- 8 GIRLS' COURT
- 9 RUNWAY TERRACE
- 10 NORTH LAWN
- 11 SOUTH LAWN
- 12 POOL



Top Water elements throughout the site are subtle.

Bottom Outdoor patios are stitched together with the new paving.

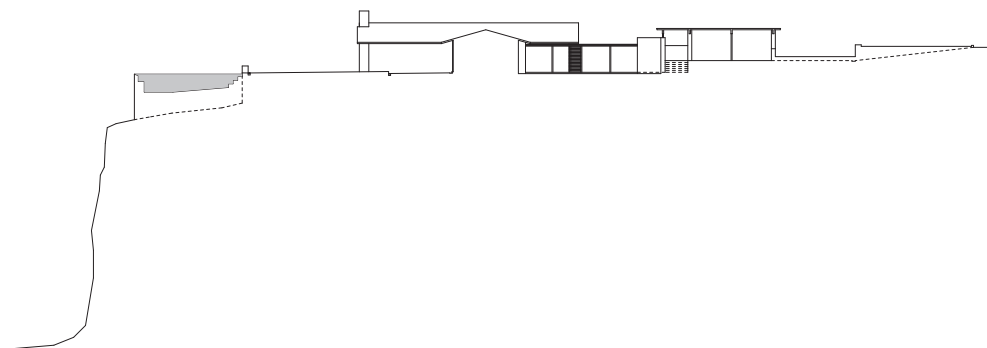


glass core, to the new pool planted in the cliff's edge, reaching for the sky.

The pool appears to float out over the cliff, infinitely extending the figurative space from the house's entry to the landscape — implying a space that reaches beyond the canvas of the horizon. In the rear garden, the physical world is distilled to its essence, becoming a place where the built environment leaves the land and embraces the sky.

You converse with material through the pores of your skin, your ears and your eyes. The dialogue does not stop at the surface, as its scent fills the air. Through touch, you exchange heat and the material gives you an immediate response. We must again find a dialogue with the earth. The earth's division of mass such as water and air embody the great constructions. — Sverre Fehn

Candid Rogers, AIA, is an architect in San Antonio.



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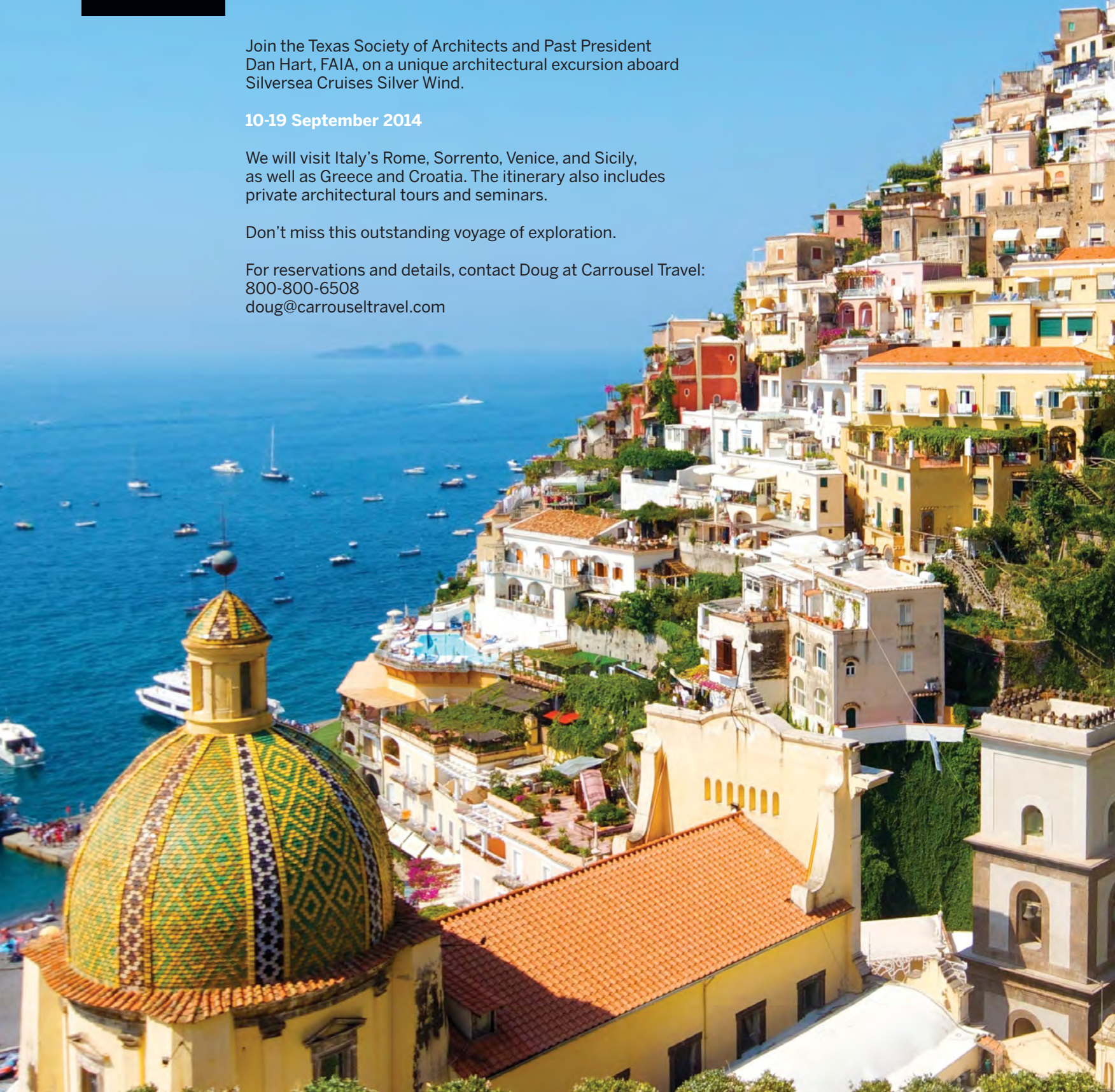
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Michelle Rossomando, AIA

Article by Catherine Gavin

Photography by Nicole Mlakar

Michelle Rossomando, AIA, looks you in the eye when she speaks to you; she helps everyone feel at ease in any situation; and she laughs easily, often at her own expense. A natural leader, Rossomando can distill any issue to its essence and has an equally impressive knack for problem-solving, which she attributes to her training as an architect. Her work life is busy, and her schedule outside of the office is jam-packed. But she makes time for it all, affecting many people's lives in a very positive way in the process.

A partner at McKinney York Architects in Austin, Rossomando is a head designer for numerous residential, institutional, and commercial projects. She has fine-tuned her approach to project management and integrated this skill into the culture of the firm and the professional growth of all its employees. Founding principal Heather McKinney, FAIA, describes Rossomando as intrepid: "She has confidence in her problem-solving and the perseverance to see knotty issues through to elegant, clever resolution. This attitude permeates her mentorship of others in the firm. She is the opposite of intellectually lazy — or lazy at all."

Needless to say, Rossomando's deft ability to keep communication open while managing huge projects has been an asset to the firm and its clients. Pastors Barbara Ruth and John Wright, McKinney York's clients for their work at Oak Hill Methodist Church, emphasized that their experience throughout the project centered on

Wright credited "Michelle's infectious laugh" as key in helping him enjoy the adventures of design and construction.

the partners' ability to listen to them. But Wright credited "Michelle's infectious laugh" as key in helping him enjoy the adventures of design and construction. "She just laughs and puts you at ease," said Wright. "She has such a zest for living that it inspires you to have confidence it is not going to be this terrible, burdensome experience. It turns out to be a joy."

Rossomando is good at making things fun, and at the same time, she pays attention to

details. Al York, AIA, principal of McKinney York, seconds his clients' assertion that Rossomando is an adept listener. "Michelle possesses a keen ear for what is said and what is left unsaid," commented York. "This makes her

These talents, along with her natural inclination to help others, show themselves in Rossomando's active community service outside the office.

particularly astute at understanding the dynamic relationships within the office and positioning people where they can be most successful."

McKinney York was honored with the 2012–2015 AIA Intern Development Program Outstanding Firm Award, largely due to Rossomando's efforts to create a supportive and unique intern experience in the office. Seven of the 12 team members are licensed architects; the rest are in

the process of becoming licensed. Rossomando says that the small things add up, and that integrating the licensure process into the daily workings of the firm has really paid off. Regular site visits as a team, for example, allow interns to get credit hours, while exposing everyone to the large variety of projects in the office. The Texas Society of Architects tipped its hat to the healthy mentorship environment by bestowing its 2013 Architecture Firm Award on McKinney York. And the praise continues to mount for the firm: Engineering News Record Texas & Louisiana named Rossomando one of its Top Twenty Under 40 in 2013.

These talents, along with her natural inclination to help others, show themselves in Rossomando's active community service outside the office. She prides herself on contributing to her neighborhood, Hyde Park in Central Austin. As a member of the Development Review Committee, she helps architects, developers, and homeowners navigate the process of seeking approval for additions and new construction in the local historic district. Murray Legge, FAIA, is currently going through the neighborhood approval process and finds the fact that an architect is on the other side of the table to be a huge help.

Grant Thomas, longtime editor of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association's monthly newsletter, noted that Rossomando's professional training has been invaluable for the community. "She is not a committee member who just chats in meetings," said Thomas. "She keeps everyone on task. Michelle gets things done." Grant also works with Rossomando in her role as a board member of Youth Launch, a local nonprofit dedicated to youth empowerment through service. "Michelle's contribution to Youth Launch has truly helped us progress," noted Grant. "Her personality is disarmingly genuine, and she is really funny." For Rossomando, lending a helping hand is practically second nature. "I really enjoy interacting with the youth — watching how much they learn and how fast they grow through the Youth Launch programs," she commented.

McKinney is quick to note, "Michelle is a sparkplug — a talented designer with a big laugh and a hard head for business. She is the kind of leader any architecture firm would love to have." Rossomando leads by example and has a lot of fun along the way.

Catherine Gavin is editor of *Texas Architect*.

Previous page Rossomando is pictured in front of UT Austin's Texas Union, one of her many recent projects on campus.

Right Through her volunteer work with the Development Review Committee of the Hyde Park Neighborhood Association, Rossomando helps others find the most appropriate design solutions for historic homes in the area. She is pictured with Murray Legge, FAIA (left), and his client.





This page clockwise from top As a board member of Youth Launch, Rossomando helped establish Urban Roots as an independent nonprofit organization. The successful Youth Launch spin-off is dedicated to teaching the community about urban farming. Her work as a mentor in the community carries into the office. She has developed an integrated program that supports team members going through the IDP process. Rossomando is pictured with the McKinney York team on one of its site visits.

Resources

La Hacienda Casitas, Harlingen

Contractors Community Development Corporation of Brownsville (General Contractor), Bougambilias Construction, Alex Gonzalez Construction, Jimmy Closner & Sons

Consultants **MEP:** MEP Systems; **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Mendoza Engineering; **CIVIL ENGINEER:** Half Assoc.; **RAS:** Accessibility Resource Specialists; **GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER:** TSI Laboratories

Resources **THERMAL & MOISTURE PROTECTION:** Tyvek; **FINISHES:** Sherwin Williams

Milk + Honey, Austin

Contractor Structura

Consultants **MEP:** AYS; **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Way Consulting Engineers; **INTERIOR CONSULTANT (PRIMARY FINISHES):** Kasey McCarty Interior Design Studio

Resources **CUSTOM MILD STEEL COUNTERTOPS/SALON CABINET WRAPS, POWDER COATED STEEL/CUSTOM HANDRAILS:** Steel House MFG; **WOOD FLOOR:** Artisan Hardwoods; **WOOD WALLS:** Structura; **RETAIL MILLWORK WALL (MEDITE FR):** Sierra Pine; **EXTERIOR DOOR & SALON SPA DOOR:** Honea Woodworks; **SALON, LOCKER, AND MANI-PEDI ROOM FLOORS (NEOSTILE):** Happy Floors

Port Townsend House, Port Townsend, Wash.

Contractor Good Homes Construction

Consultants **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** KL&A

Resources **VAPOR BARRIER:** VaproShield; **MEMBRANE ROOFING:** Carlisle; **WOOD SHINGLES:** Waska; **METAL-CLAD WOOD WINDOWS:** Loewen; **KITCHEN SINK:** Rohl; **FAUCETS:** Hansgrohe; **FREESTANDING TUB:** Cheviot

Cascading Creek House, Austin

Contractor Spencer Construction Management

Consultants **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Conrad Engineering; **INTERIOR DESIGN:** Alan Cano; **LANDSCAPING/IRRIGATION:** Silverleaf Landscape Services, Kirk Foster; **DRYWALL CONTRACTOR:** Spectrum Drywall; **ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR:** Colvin Electric; **FOUNDATION CONTRACTOR:** RCS Concrete; **PAVERS/PAVING CONTRACTOR:** RCS Concrete; **PLUMBING CONTRACTOR:** Cobb Mechanical; **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Conrad Engineering; **POOL ENGINEER:** Duffy Engineering; **TILE CONTRACTOR:** Roman & Roman

Resources **ALARM SYSTEM:** Sabre Security; **APPLIANCES:** Ferguson; **ART/ANTIQUES:** Andrew Anderson; **AUDIO/VISUAL:** AV Automation; **BRICK/STONE (MANUFACTURER/DISTRIBUTOR):** Alkusari Stone; **CABINETRY (KITCHEN/BATHROOM):** QSI; **CARPETING:** Edgar Kelly Rugs; **CONCRETE SUPPLIER:** Lauren Concrete; **COUNTERTOPS:** Stone Systems of Houston; **DOORS:** Stock (pre-hung), Nightingale (Dallas) (pockets); **FIREPLACE EQUIPMENT:** Scott & Cooner; **FLOORING:** Roman & Roman (tile); **GLASS/MIRRORS:** Marble Falls Glass; **HVAC (CONTRACTOR/DISTRIBUTOR):** Cobb Mechanical; **INSULATION:** Deruiter; **INTERIOR TRIM:** Bercy Chen Studio, Bailey Custom Trim; **KITCHEN ACCESSORIES:** Re-used from previous home; **LANDSCAPE SOD SUPPLIER:** Bare Spot Solutions; **LANDSCAPE SOIL & GRAVEL SUPPLIER:** Marcello's Sand & Loam; **LIGHTING:** Rect Lighting, Legacy Lighting; **LUMBER/INTERIOR:** US Lumber; **METAL FABRICATION:** Estructuras Hidalgo (structural), Bercy Chen Studio (custom); **POOL COVER:** Travis Pool Covers; **POOL GUNITE SUPPLIER/INSTALLER:** Custom Crete; **POOL PLASTER:** H&H Tile & Plaster; **PLUMBING FIXTURES:** Ferguson; **ROOFING:** Metal Tech USA; **BLINDS/DRAPERY:** AV Automation; **SYSTEMS (SOLAR):** Kingspan Solar (solar hot-water), Circular Energy (solar pv); **SYSTEMS (CISTERN):** Park Equipment; **STUCCO/PLASTER:** DC Stucco; **TILE DISTRIBUTOR:** Alkusari Stone, Bisazza / Threshold

Torcasso Residence, Santa Fe, N. M.

Contractor JM Evans Construction

Consultants **ARTIST:** Margo Sawyer; **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT:** Mesa Design Group; **LIGHTING CONSULTANT:** 2clighting

Resources **STRUCTURAL CONCRETE/POLISHED CONCRETE FLOORS/RAMMED EARTH/MANUFACTURED TRUSSES/PAINTED GYPSUM BOARD WALLS AND CEILINGS/PE CEILINGS, SOFFITS, AND SIDING:** Golden Siebert; **AUTOCLAVE-AERATED CONCRETE BLOCK:** Xella (Golden Siebert); **STRUCTURAL STEEL:** Mesa Steel (Golden Siebert); **CUSTOM MILLWORK:** Foxwood; **SPRAY INSULATION:** Alpine Builders Supply; **FLEETWOOD ALUMINUM DOORS AND WINDOWS:** Fleetwood Aluminum (Golden Siebert); **CUSTOM PIVOT DOOR:** Kozlowski Woodworks; **EXTERIOR STUCCO:** GMB Construction; **COUNTER TOPS & SPLASHES:** CesarStone (Captain Marble); **GAS FIREPLACE:** Aucraft; **PHOTOVOLTAIC SYSTEM:** Positive Energy; **STEEL RAILING SYSTEM:** Fastenal Company; **WINDOW COVERINGS ROLL DOWN SHADES:** Phifer (Austin Shadeworks); **WINDOW COVERINGS DRAPERY:** Knoll Luxe; **TILE:** Ann Sacks Tile & Stone, Dal Tile; **FURNISHINGS:** Minotti (Urbanspace Interiors), Poltrona Frau (Scott Cooner), Mark Macek; **AREA RUGS:** David Allen Rugs; **ART:** GF Contemporary, Margo Sawyer; **BULTHAUP SYSTEMS:** Bulthaup Dallas; **PLUMBING:** Dorn Bracht (Edelman Plumbing Supply); **FORCED AIR COOLING/HYDRONIC FLOOR HEATING:** Sun Mountain Plumbing & Heating; **CONTROLS:** Lutron (Sun Mountain Plumbing & Heating); **2CLIGHTING LINEAR LIGHTING SYSTEM:** Belfer Lighting

Sylvan Beach Pavilion, La Porte

Contractor SpawGlass

Consultants **STRUCTURAL & CIVIL ENGINEER:** Walter P Moore; **MEP ENGINEER:** Jones/DBR; **HISTORICAL RESTORATION:** SWCA Environmental Consultants; **COST ESTIMATOR:** CCS

Resources **CONCRETE:** Rebar & Accessories: Cemex (CMC Construction Services), Spawglass; **MASONRY (NEW BRICK):** Veazy; **BRICK RESTORATION:** Restoration Services; **METALS:** Milestone Metals; **WOODS, PLASTICS, COMPOSITES:** Simpson, Hoover Treated Wood Products (U.S. Lumber Brokers), Spaw-Glass; **THERMAL & MOISTURE PROTECTION:** Henry (Restoration Services), Morin (MCT Sheet Metal); **OPENINGS:** Chapman Smidt Hardware, Kawneer, Southwest Glass of Houston, Oxford Builders; **FINISHES:** Armstrong (Applied Finish Systems), International Cellulose Corporation (Fireproof Contractors), USG; **SPECIAL-TIES:** Crowley Signs (STS Spec 10 Sales); **EQUIPMENT:** Park USA (Jimerson Underground); **PLUMBING:** JM Reed, Charlotte, Kohler/Zurn; **HEATING, VENTILATING, AIR CONDITIONING (HVAC):** Derry-Berry, York (JCI); **ELECTRICAL:** Visionaire Lighting (CW Lighting & Associates), Tag Electric Sellers, (Summit); **UTILITIES:** Charlotte Pipe, Diamond Plastics, North American Pipe Corporation (Jimerson Underground)

Rockridge Gardens, San Antonio

Contractor RBC General Contractors

Consultants **STRUCTURAL ENGINEER:** Structural Design Consulting; **LIGHTING DESIGN:** Studio Lumina; **GEOTECHNICAL ENGINEER:** Rock Engineering & Testing Laboratory; **SURVEYOR:** Jones & Carter

Resources **POOL:** Artesian Pools, Brett Corrigan; **FOUNTAIN:** Fountain Works, Michael Perry ■

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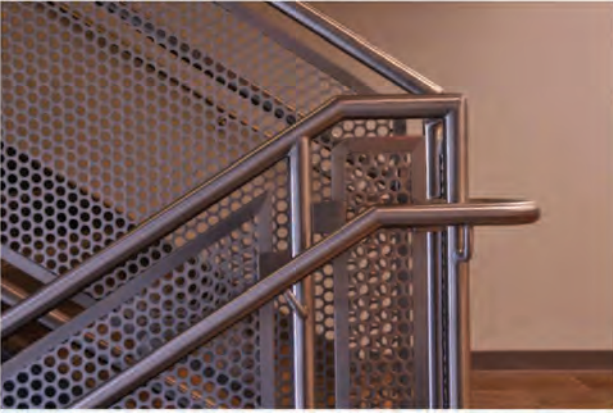
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Trends of the Trade



AIA National Convention

On June 26–28 in Chicago, the American Institute of Architects will host its 2014 National Convention. Themed "Design With Purpose," the event will feature leaders, luminaries, and legends from within and outside architecture sharing their insights on the opportunities, challenges, and possibilities facing architects and the profession.

At press time, confirmed keynoters are Jeanne Gang, FAIA, MacArthur Fellow and founder of the Chicago-based collective Studio Gang Architects, and acclaimed artist, urban planner, and Rebuild Foundation creative director and founder Theaster Gates. Attendees will also hear from a third keynoter, ARCHITECT Live host Stephen Chung, AIA.

Convention attendees will have the option of following an in-depth track — Design & Health, Energy, or Small Firm Practice — or mixing and matching from nearly 200 educational sessions and 80 tours. Tour sites will include local neighborhoods and landscapes, classics from Frank Lloyd Wright and Mies van der Rohe, a skyline river cruise, and more. Half-day and full-day pre-convention sessions focused on critical upcoming areas, such as international business opportunities, disaster planning, and resiliency, will also be offered.

Special discounts are available for young professionals, new AIA members, and students. Advance registration ends on May 28. For more information, visit convention.aia.org.



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The 2012 Charles E. Peterson Prize First Place Winner was awarded to The University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture for the students' work on the North-Evans Chateau in Austin.

HDP Announces Competitions for 2014

Heritage Documentation Programs (HDP) is a division of the U.S. National Park Service responsible for administering the Historic American Buildings Survey (HABS), Historic American Engineering Record (HAER), and Historic American Landscapes Survey (HALS).

Four competitions are being sponsored by HDP in 2014:

The Charles E. Peterson Prize is awarded to the best sets of measured drawings prepared by students of architecture and donated to HABS; accepted entries will be transmitted to the HABS collection at the Library of Congress.

The Kenneth L. Anderson Prize is given to the highest awarded Peterson Prize entry from a university located in the state of Texas.

The Leicester B. Holland Prize, open to both students and professionals, recognizes the best single-sheet measured drawing of a historic building, site, or structure prepared to HABS, HAER, or HALS standards.

The HALS Challenge, open to everyone, invites people to complete short format histories to document landscapes created during the Great Depression.

All competitions include cash prizes, and deadlines vary. For more information, including instructions on how to enter, visit the "Competitions" section of the HDP website, www.nps.gov/history/hdp. ■

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Water

by Catherine Gavin

“While trying to accommodate the growing needs of an expanding and very thirsty civilization, we are reshaping the Earth in colossal ways. In this new and powerful role over the planet, we are also capable of engineering our own demise. We have to learn to think more long-term about the consequences of what we are doing, while we are doing it. My hope is that these pictures will stimulate a process of thinking about something essential to our survival something we often take for granted — until it’s gone.” — Edward Burtynsky

Artist Edward Burtynsky is bringing attention to water and its value to our society as a diminishing natural resource. Renowned for his large-format photographs, Burtynsky’s latest project brought the Canadian photographer to Texas. His work in the Lone Star State has concentrated on the pivot

irrigation fields in the Panhandle region. Burtynsky captures the marks on the earth from a bird’s-eye view. He argues that agriculture represents the most pervasive human activity on the planet, and that approximately 70 percent of all fresh water under human control

Burtynsky’s work in the Lone Star State has concentrated on the pivot irrigation fields in the Panhandle region.

is dedicated to this industry. With his focus on the pivot irrigation systems, Burtynsky hopes to bring new attention to depletion of the Ogallala Aquifer, which stretches from the Panhandle into the Great Plains, crossing the borders of eight states. ■

EDWARD BURTYSKY PHOTO COURTESY NICHOLAS METTIER GALLERY, TORONTO / HOWARD GREENBERG GALLERY, AND BRUCE WOLKOWITZ GALLERY, NEW YORK.

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